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TO CONTEST LOK SABHA POLL

Tamilisai quits L-G and Governor posts

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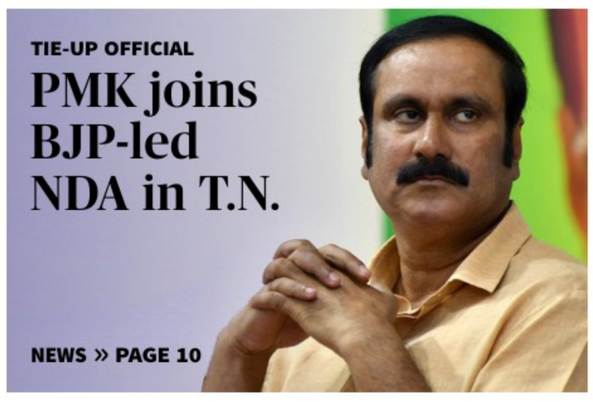

TIE-UP OFFICIAL

PMK joins BJP-led NDA in T.N.

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Putin secures fifth term after landslide victory

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Violence, homelessness, mental health

Accounts of trauma and life events

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SUPER KING READY

Dhoni is as match-fit as ever, says Hussey

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NEARBY

There is no money to run State govt.: Modi

SHIVAMOGGA
Alleging that the Congress has made Karnataka an "ATM for the party", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the State was left with no money to run the government. » Page 4

Nameboards: No sealing of premises, says HC

BENGALURU
The High Court of Karnataka on Monday directed the State government not to suspend the trade licence and seal the premises of private establishments for not changing the display to 60% in Kannada on the upper half of nameboards. » Page 3

Disclose complete details of poll bonds, SC tells SBI

Top court asks the bank not to be selective while making disclosure; directs it to share all data on purchase of bonds, receipt of contributions to EC; bank chief must submit affidavit by March 21

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the State Bank of India (SBI) to be "candid and fair" and not selective while directing it to make a "complete disclosure" of electoral bonds' data, including their unique hidden alphanumeric and serial numbers, to the Election Commission (EC) for publication.

"The State Bank of India was expected to give every conceivable detail with it regarding the electoral bonds. Your attitude seems to be 'you tell us to give the details, then we will give'. SBI should not be selective. SBI has to be candid and fair to the court," Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, heading a five-judge Bench, addressed the SBI, represented by senior advocate Harish Salve.

> The State Bank of India was expected to give every conceivable detail with it regarding the electoral bonds. Your attitude seems to be 'you tell us to give the details, then we will give'... The SBI has to be candid and fair to the court
> **D.Y. CHANDRACHUD**
> Chief Justice of India

The court said the information on electoral bonds forwarded to the EC should contain "all details in terms of purchase and in terms of receipt of contributions" to political parties under the electoral bonds scheme.

The Bench directed SBI Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara to submit an affidavit by 5 p.m. on Thursday in the top court, stating that "SBI has disclosed all details of electoral bonds which were in its possession and custody and not withheld any information from disclosure".

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No urgent hearing, SC tells industry bodies

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court refused to urgently hear on Monday an intervention by industry associations against its order questioning the SBI's non-disclosure of the alphanumeric numbers of electoral bonds. » PAGE 11

JD(S) got ₹48.7 cr. before April 5, 2019, show data

CHENNAI
New documents on electoral bonds published by the EC on Monday show that the Janata Dal (Secular) received ₹48.75 crore between March 8, 2018 and April 5, 2019. » PAGE 11

City facing shortage of 500 MLD of water: CM

Parched city: A tanker supplying water to the residents of Dwaraka Nagar, Hosakerehalli, in Bengaluru on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that Bengaluru is facing a shortage of 500 million litres per day (MLD) of water and the State government has taken various measures to mitigate its impact. This is the first time that the water shortage the city is facing this summer has been quantified.

"The city needs 2,600 MLD of water, of which 1,450 MLD is coming from the Cauvery and 650 MLD from the underground water table through borewells. There is a shortage of 500 MLD," he said.

The Chief Minister was speaking after chairing a review meeting on the water crisis in the city on Monday. The is the first meeting that Mr. Siddaramaiah has helmed on the crisis plaguing the city.

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EC transfers six Home Secretaries, Bengal DGP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Within 48 hours of announcing the Lok Sabha election schedule, the Election Commission (EC) on Monday ordered the transfer of a host of senior officials in various States, including the Home Secretaries of Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand as well as the Director-General of Police of West Bengal, Rajeev Kumar.

The transfers, according to the EC, are part of its efforts to maintain a level playing field and ensure the integrity of the electoral process. The decisions were taken after a meeting between Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu here, sources said.

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Free-spirited Shreyanka brings out her best when it matters the most

The off-spinner turns up the heat in the climactic phase of the Women's Premier League after having a cold start to the season

Lavanya Lakshminarayanan

During the inter-zonal one-day tournament early this year, there was a day when South Zone captain Shreyanka Patil was having a poor day at the office. Her West counterpart, Smriti Mandhana, went up to her to console her and she broke down.

"I can be myself around Smriti," Shreyanka remembered. "I wasn't happy with my bowling. She reassured me and said, 'it's okay. March 17th, you're going to do it for us.'"

True to word, Shreyanka would pick four wickets giving away a miserly 12 runs in 3.3 overs to help Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Delhi Capitals to lift its maiden Women's Premier League title.

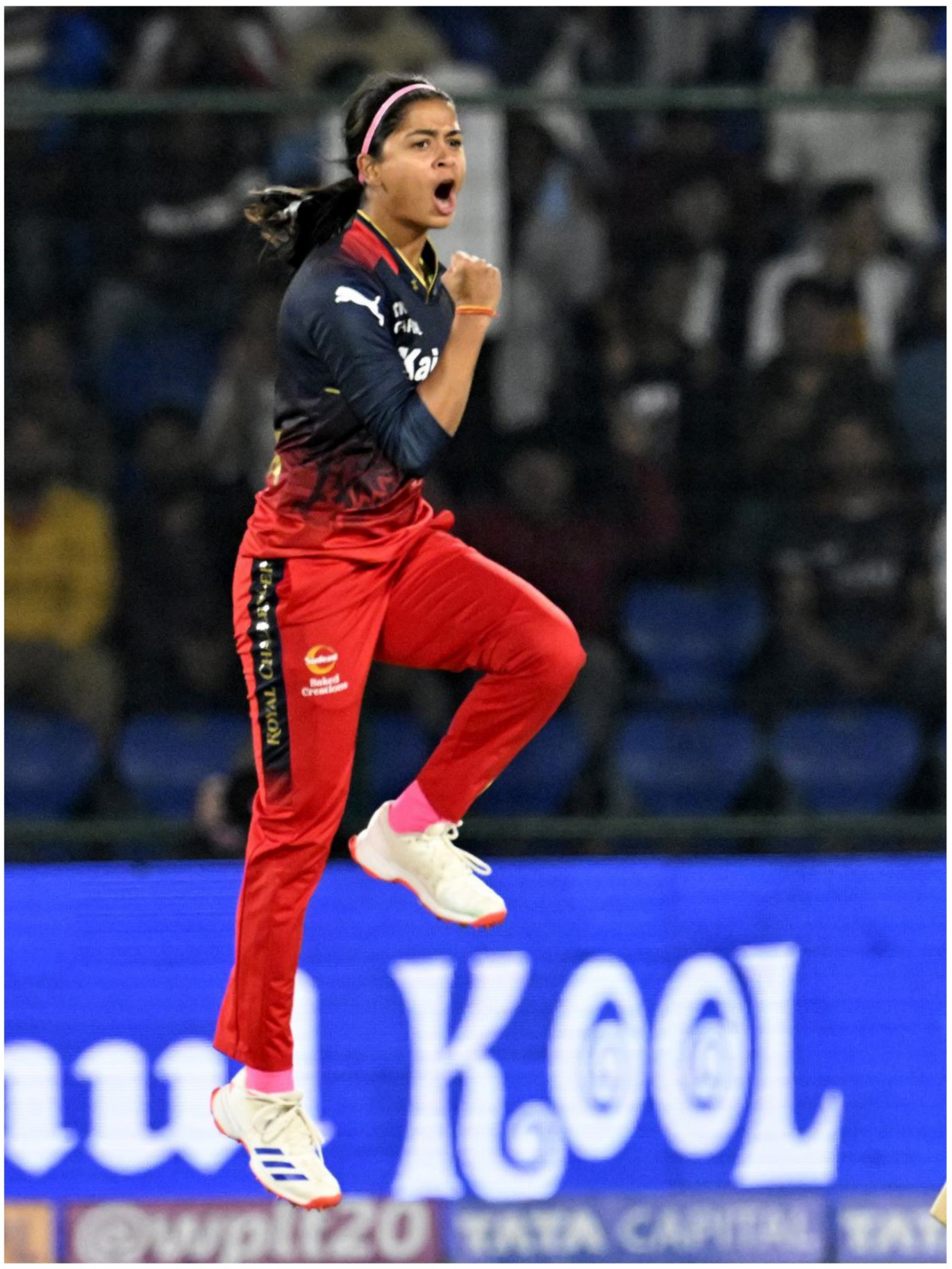
Cricket is a game filled with characters of every variety. You have the quiet geniuses on one end who believe their sport and skill can do the talking for them. Then there's this other bunch - loud, proud, happy to show their swagger on the field as much as they do off it. Shreyanka belongs to this second kind.

After Richa Ghosh hit the winning runs, Shreyanka - along with a number of her teammates - was unstoppable. She was dancing constantly, coordinating group steps for the side; jumping on people, hugging people. It's like no one was watching, no inhibitions, no limits. As the team posed by the champions' photo op area, Shreyanka stood before it, dancing away to glory, like a little ballerina too immersed in her performance to have a thought for the world.

"I just wanted to be myself. I told Smriti, please don't stop me today. I just want to be myself. And she was like all yours," she said.

This was a marked difference to how her season began. The 21-year-old got off to an underwhelming start in WPL season two. In her first match (against UP Warriorz), she conceded 32 runs without a wicket in three overs. Against Gujarat Giants, she conceded 13 runs in a single over bowled. Against an imposing Delhi Capitals, she gave away 40 runs in three overs, getting a wicket too while she gave away 15 runs in two overs for a wicket against Mumbai Indians.

"Shreyanka was the first one to come up and say, 'I am not bowling well.' She didn't need me or anyone else to go to her with that... She came and asked, 'I am not bowling well. What can I do?" She'll come up with the solutions too. That's her character," Malolan Rangarajan, RCB's assistant coach revealed after the Eliminator where the side beat Mumbai Indians for the second time.



R.V. MOORTHY

THE GIST

- Shreyanka finished with the Purple Cap in the second edition of the Women's Premier League with 13 wickets in eight matches
- During a league fixture against Mumbai Indians, she sustained a hairline fracture in her left hand while trying to save a six. That ruled her out for two games, but she battled her way back into the XI
- Shreyanka was an important cog in the RCB spin wheel, helping plug the run flow in key overs. In the final, she took four wickets and Molineux three to leave Capitals in tatters
- Over the past 12 months, she has been given the leadership role in the domestic setups she has been part of. She was also a crucial part of Caribbean Premier League side Guyana Amazon Warriors and helped them finish runner-up. She took nine wickets in five games to finish as the top wicket-taker in the league

Regaining her mojo

The week RCB's performances improved coincided with Shreyanka regaining her mojo. The turning point was oddly a bad ball Meg Lanning dispatched to the boundary ropes in RCB's one-run loss to DC in New Delhi.

"She knew she was one ball away from feeling good again and that happened with the Meg Lanning wicket," Shreyanka's coach Arjun Dev told *The Hindu*. "It was the ball before the wicket. It was a bad ball and went for four but how the ball came out of her hand felt good for her. She came back the next ball and things worked out after that."

Incidentally, in the final, Shreyanka dismissed Lanning once more, a wicket that turned the face of the game.

Shreyanka came into that game having missed two matches due to an injury to her hand. The break was a blessing in disguise not just in helping her get some time off but also in working on what was going wrong with her technique, if anything. Stir crazy Shreyanka did not enjoy life on the sidelines.

"The first day I didn't play, I went to everyone and said, "What am I supposed to do? How do I react? What should I do?" I am just standing there and doing nothing. It was a really bad feeling. Everyone made sure I was just sitting in a corner, because I am naughty and can get up to some monkey business. Even when I was jumping around in the middle of a match, one of them would sternly tell me to sit. Everything teaches you something and that's how I see it," she said.

Dev believes that it isn't so much the person she dismissed as it was about her own sense of her technique that turned Shreyanka's season for her.

"When the small things go your way, it feels good. We focus on how it's coming out of the hands," Dev explained.

"If she's giving it enough revs, if she's actually over-spinning the ball – these are small technical things that we focus on. She knows these things, how to look for them and correct them. She understands her bowling enough to do most of it herself. It doesn't even have to mean bowling to someone 22 yards away, it could just be spinning the ball to someone 10 yards away... just watching the seam out of her hands and making her feel like she's in a better space," he added.

While Lanning's wicket in the game was the first of four she would go on to take in that crunch league game, she was left in tears as RCB fell short by one solitary run, with teammates and opponents alike rushing to console her for a remarkable fight, irrespective of the result.

In the Eliminator, much like the league game before that against the same opponent – Mumbai Indians, Shreyanka was fielded in the death, partnering Sophie Molineux and Asha Sobhana in keeping things tight and eventually helping RCB make the summit clash. She also took the key wickets of Hayley Matthews and Harmanpreet Kaur when RCB was defending a subpar 135 against an imposing MI batting lineup. Harmanpreet's wicket turned the game on its head with MI bottling what was otherwise a comfortable chase in the last 12 balls.

"When you see things like that, you know that when there are crunch moments, these characters will stand up and deliver. Shreyanka is a warrior. Playing with a niggle, nobody will think she has an injury. These are characters we are very proud to have in RCB and we're excited to see what she will go on to do for the club and the country," Rangarajan said after the game.

Shreyanka foxing Harmanpreet was no fluke. She was happy to risk the MI captain switching into her trigger-happy mode if it meant she could draw out an error.

Character development in CPL

The significance of this Harmanpreet wicket and how it came about reminds Dev of how the duo plotted Matthews' wicket when Shreyanka turned out for the Guyana Amazon Warriors in the Caribbean Premier League last year. She beat Matthews with a quicker ball which went too full and clipped her off stump. It made the world sit up and notice the only Indian in the CPL.

That tournament was transformative for Shreyanka in more ways than one.

"She was a complete newbie last year, playing in front of 30,000 people at the Brabourne and DY Patil Stadiums and holding her own. She showed she belonged to this stage. She then got her India break before which she featured in the Caribbean Premier League.

"CPL was a great experience for her in terms of growing up... just being the overseas player and having the responsibility helped her grow up a little bit. She's always been looked after like a baby so this helped in maturing a bit in terms of the way she thinks about the game," Dev said.

He credits Stafanie Taylor, Shreyanka's captain at the franchise, for much of it.

"Before heading to the CPL, Shreyanka had played domestic cricket and a season of the WPL. So she went from a very control-oriented domestic set up to a different environment. You practice, you play and then you're on your own. As an overseas player, that added responsibility was there on her. She wasn't someone who could just come in and bowl the easy overs and get done with it. She needed to bowl the tough overs, when pressure built, the captain would turn to her. Stafanie Taylor was her captain there and after the first game, she told her to set her own fields and do as she deemed fit. That was completely new for her and it was a freedom she craved for a long time. We believe in planning and she had her plans and when Taylor gave her that freedom, she really took off. Taylor told her to do her thing, saying she would step in if it doesn't work. That was really nice for her," he added.

Control is an element Dev is trying to work on with Shreyanka, not in the way you'd think though. While control is great for a bowler in terms of mastery over their skills, it might not be the best way to make leaders of those who show promise.

"In domestic cricket, I don't think youngsters or even senior players are allowed to be leaders. There's a lot of control and everyone feels discipline is important and rules are key. In that environment, I don't feel you're going to have leaders growing. You're just going to have followers," he points out.

Ripple effect

Following might not always be a bad thing though. Shreyanka, as Dev puts it, is a true blue Bengaluru girl. She loves the big stage and loves the attention and has the wares to put on a show to remember with bat and ball. However, she serves a larger purpose in being a bridge between the level of cricket at tournaments like WPL and CPL and the domestic ecosystem.

Dev points out how rubbing shoulders with the likes of Perry could go a long way in rounding out Shreyanka as an individual in a cut-throat sport like cricket.

"There was a moment in the Eliminator where Perry dove by the boundary trying to stop a ball. She couldn't and it went for four. She could have, per her own lofty standards. Anyone else would have hit the ground or said, 'damn' but not Perry. She picked up the ball and ran to her next fielding position. Those things go a long way. Your body language is picked up by these kids. Hopefully that passes on from Shreyanka to the domestic cricket circles she moves around in," he said.

Dev was in the crowd, watching his student turn up for her franchise, helping the side to a maiden franchise title, something the side's men's vertical has not managed in 16 years. Once all the fanfare died down, Shreyanka is just happy to repay the faith her 'sister' Smriti had on her from the very start.

"I wanted to be the go-to bowler for Smriti. I wanted everyone to believe in me and trust that I could bowl the tough overs well this year. It's something I worked on consciously, bettering myself in the PowerPlay and middle overs. Smriti trusted me and that made all the difference in winning this title," Shreyanka concluded.

INBRIEF

NRN gifts four-month-old grandson shares worth ₹240 cr.

N.R. Narayana Murthy, co-founder of Infosys, has given shares valued at over ₹240 crore to his four-month-old grandson, Ekagrah Rohan Murty, potentially making him the youngest millionaire in India. Master Ekagrah now owns 1,500,000 shares, equivalent to a 0.04% stake, in Infosys, the country's second-largest information technology services company, as per a regulatory filing the company made on both the bourses, BSE and NSE.

Post this share transfer, Mr. Murthy's stake in Infosys has declined to 0.36% from 0.40%. The mode of allotment was off-market and the transaction came into effect on March 15.

From Page One

City facing shortage of 500 MLD of water: CM

Apart from elaborating on several measures taken to mitigate and navigate through the crisis, Mr. Siddaramaiah also announced that a technical advisory committee would be formed to ensure that such a drinking water crisis does not recur in the city.

Mr. Siddaramaiah said that there was enough water in the Cauvery basin to provide for the drinking water needs of the core city till June-end, by when the monsoon will begin. "There is 11.02 tmcft of water in the KRS reservoir and 9.02 tmcft in the Kabini reservoir," he said.

The crisis is in the outer zones which are yet to be served by the Cauvery water, the Chief Minister said.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (March 19, Tuesday), the following articles are available:

- What do FTAs with European countries signal? **bit.ly/ftaseuropean**
- Anthropocene epoch declaration unlikely soon, but the idea lives on **bit.ly/anthropocenesc**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

6,900 government borewells have dried up in city: Siddaramaiah

'We are drilling new borewells at 313 places and rejuvenating 1,200. Funds are not a problem'; he adds that treated water will be filled in dry lakes of the city on the lines of the K.C. Valley project

WATER WOES

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that of the 14,000 government borewells in the city, almost half of them - 6,900 - have dried up, an indicator of how bad the water crisis in the city is. He was speaking after chairing a review meeting of the drinking water crisis here on Monday.

"We are drilling new borewells in 313 places and rejuvenating 1,200. Funds are not a problem. We have given enough funds for drinking water purposes," he said.

The Chief Minister said that treated water will be filled in dry lakes of the city on the lines of the K.C. Valley project. Treated water from K.C. Valley in the city is being used to fill lakes and tanks in Kolar and Chickballapur districts.

"We have identified 14 lakes in the city for the project. This will help revive and improve the underground water table levels around these lakes," he said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah directed the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) officials to increase the number of control rooms and attend to complaints of water shortage immediately. "You will be held responsible if people suffer from water shortage," he told officials.

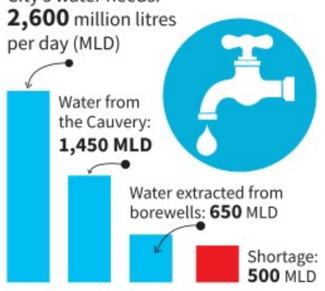
He said the officials have been directed to commandeer any private tankers, including the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) tankers, to supply water.

'Robotic technology'

Meanwhile, BWSSB Chairman V. Ramprasath Manohar held a meeting with contractors maintaining the BWSSB's borewells and directed them to adopt robotic technology.

"Many BWSSB borewells have gone dry owing to improper maintenance, mainly because of using the motor even when there is no water. So it is better if we adopt robotic technology to maintain these borewells. This will help the board monitor all borewells, their water levels but can also be programmed such that motors are switched off when the water is not there. This will help in better maintenance of our borewells," he said.

Fact sheet


City's water needs: 2,600 million litres per day (MLD)
Water from the Cauvery: 1,450 MLD
Water extracted from borewells: 650 MLD
Shortage: 500 MLD

- Core Bengaluru, served by the Cauvery, needs **1.6** tmcft of water a month
- Core Bengaluru needs **5.6** tmcft of water from Cauvery till June-end
- Storage in KRS: **11.02** tmcft
- Storage in Kabini reservoir: **9.02** tmcft
- Total storage available in Cauvery basin: **20.04** tmcft

Total government borewells in Bengaluru Urban district: around **14,000**	Number of borewells that have dried up: **6,900**	New borewells being drilled up: **313**	Borewells being rejuvenated: **1,200**

Three arrested for assaulting shop owner

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The accused came to victim's shop and objected to him playing music over the loudspeaker

An argument between a group of youth and a mobile phone shop owner over a loudspeaker on Juma Masjid Road on Siddanna Street in Nagarathpete took on a communal colour after the BJP accused the Congress and the police of trying to protect the accused.

The incident occurred on Sunday around 6.25 p.m. when Mukesh Singh, 26, owner of a mobile phone shop, was playing devotional songs on a loudspeaker.

The accused – Sulaiman, Shahnawaz, Rohith, Danish, Tarun, and some others – came to his shop and objected to him playing music over the loudspeaker.

This led to a heated argument, which turned ugly when the accused allegedly slapped Mukesh. Mukesh came out of the shop and confronted the accused.

The accused overpowered Mukesh and assaulted him before leaving the place. The incident was recorded on CCTV camera.

Based on his complaint, the police registered a case of attempt to murder, assault and criminal intimidation. They arrested Sulaiman, Shahnawaz, and Rohith who were remanded in judicial custody.

In a tweet, the BJP accused the Congress government and the jurisdictional police of trying to protect the accused.

BJP MPs P.C. Mohan and Tejasvi Surya also visited the victim's shop. Accompanied by hundreds of their followers, Mr. Surya demanded the immediate arrest of the remaining accused and threatened to call a Nagarathpete bandh otherwise.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated March 19, we take a look at the water crisis in Bengaluru. A recent BWSSB notification prohibits water use for washing vehicles, gardening, fountains, constructions and other activities. Bengaluru's desperate dependence on an external drinking water source, while offering scant regard to alternatives, came out starkly in that one single notification.

Man arrested on charge of child marriage and abetment to suicide

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Hebbagodi police on Sunday arrested a 25-year-old wall painter after his 17-year-old wife was found dead.

Based on a complaint by officials of the district child welfare committee, the police arrested the accused Vishal Kumar charging him under the child marriage Act and for abetment to suicide.

According to the police, Vishal Kumar, a native of Bihar, married Nilam from his hometown last year, and had come to the city alone to work as a wall painter.

Around 20 days ago, Vishal brought Nilam to the city and the couple was living in Hebbagodi.

The police added that the accused had allegedly harassed the victim and she was found dead on March 13.

(Those having distress or suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani on 104 for help)

Godown gutted

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A godown was gutted in an accidental fire that broke out early on Monday.

Passers-by noticed the fire at the godown situated in Kothanur around 4 a.m. and alerted the fire control room.

Since the godown was closed, no one was injured in the accident, the police said.

THE HINDU
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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
E-Tender Notice No.BE-29-2023-24-OT-32
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Description of work	Approx. Value
Operation, Switching & Maintenance of substations over Bengaluru Division for one year.	Rs. 2,01,58,656/-

Last date for submission of bids : Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 05-04-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Keep visiting the website for any corrigendum till closing date
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer Bengaluru
PUB/760/AAD/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
E-TENDER NOTICE No. 07/MYS/2024 of 14-03-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Sl.	Item of work	Approx. Value
1	**Amaravathi Colony-Kotturu Section:** Protection works for vulnerable cutting between Km.99/650-100/200 for both sides with Boulder netting and Drain between Harpanhallli-Teligi Stations.	Rs. 2,39,81,641/-
2	**Sub Work-1:** Improvements to drainage arrangements and approach road in RUB No.35A, 123A between Chikjajur-Rayadurg Section in Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Chitradurga Sub-Division. **Sub Work-2**: Improvements to drainage arrangements and approach road in RUB No.74A in Birur-Chikjajur Section and RUB No.79A in Chikjajur-Rayadurg Section in Assistant Divisional Engineer/Chitradurga Sub-Division. **Sub Work-3**: Improvements to Retaining wall and approach road in RUB No.12A between Chikjajur-Rayadurg Section in Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Chitradurga Sub-Division. **Sub Work-4**: Improvements to drainage arrangements and approach road in RUB No.30A between Chikjajur-Rayadurg Section in Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Chitradurga Sub-Division.	Rs. 3,27,48,592/-
3	Rebuilding of stone arch bridges and Strengthening of bridges by jacketting between Chikjajur-Rayadurg and Chikjajur-Sasalu Sections. **Sub Work -1**: Assistant Divisional Engineer/Chitradurga Sub-Division.: Rebuilding of stone arch Bridge Nos.7, 9, 10, 12 between Chikjajur-Rayadurg Sections	Rs. 3,30,98,670/-
3	**Mysuru :-** Improvements to various staff amenities old Officers bungalows 9 Nos (10/A, 10/B,17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25) in VRC Colony Mysuru (Balance work).	Rs. 1,12,36,220/-

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 05-04-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Engineer / Co-Ordination Mysuru
PUB/759/AAD/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

RAIL LAND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
(A Statutory Authority under Ministry of Railways, Government of India)
Unit No. 702-B, 7th Floor, Konnectus Tower-II, DMRC Building, Ajmeri Gate, New Delhi-110002 Ph: + 91-11-23232854
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL THROUGH E-TENDER
(RFP Notice No. RLDA/2024/RFP/CD-18 of 2024 dated 23.02.2024)
GRANT OF LEASE/LICENSE OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 3.135 ACRES OF RAILWAY LAND AT LAND PARCEL-II NEAR PUDUCHERRY RAILWAY STATION IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DIVISION OF SOUTHERN RAILWAY FOR 60 YEARS.

Name of Site	Approx. Area of the site	Reference Built Up Area	Bid Security	Reserve Price
Land Parcel-II at Puducherry Railway Station, Puducherry	12,688 Sqm.	31,720 Sqm.	Rs. 1.0 Cr.	Rs. 59.00 Cr.

ONLINE PRE-BID MEETING ON WEBEX: 20th March,2024 at 11:30 HRS. (Online Pre-bid meeting details to be obtained from JGM/Project/SBC)
Last Date of Submission of e-bid Online: 22.04.2024 UPTO 15:00 Hrs.
For Further details of the project, please visit our website www.rlda.indianrailways.gov.in or on e-procurement portal www.tenderwizard.in/RLDA under the heading 'e-tender'
For any clarifications, may please contact:-

Joint General Manager/ Project/SBC M: 9959187887 jgmpsbc@rlda.railnet.gov.in	Chief Project Manager/SBC M: 9361591387 cpmbangalore@rlda.railnet.gov.in	Mr. Sulabh Goyal General Consultant M: 9899911835 sulabh.goel@in.ey.com	For e-bid queries- Mr. Suraj Singh M: 95996 53865 suraj@etenderwizard.com

Note:- Any Corrigendum or Addendum shall be published only on above mentioned websites. JGM/Tender, (M) 9990114988

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय,
पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमंडल,
सरायकेला–खरसावाँ
"स्थगन सूचना"
पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमंडल, सरायकेला–खरसावाँ द्वारा आमंत्रित Tender Reference No. RCD /SERAIKELLA/34 दिनांक 13.03.2024 तथा पी०आर० संख्या–PR 322764 Road (23-24):D द्वारा प्रकाशित निविदा को अपरिहार्य कारणों से स्थगित किया जाता है ।
कार्यपालक अभियंता,
पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमंडल,
सरायकेला–खरसावाँ
PR 323085 Road(23-24).D

FORM A
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
(Regulation 14 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Voluntary Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2017)
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS OF HKMEDIAGO SOLUTIONS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED

1	NAME OF CORPORATE PERSON	HKMEDIAGO SOLUTIONS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
2	DATE OF INCORPORATION OF CORPORATE PERSON	20/02/2006
3	AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH CORPORATE PERSON IS INCORPORATED / REGISTERED	Registrar of Companies ("ROC") – Bangalore, Karnataka.
4	CORPORATE IDENTITY NUMBER / LIMITED LIABILITY IDENTITY NUMBER OF CORPORATE PERSON	U72200KA2006PTC038540
5	ADDRESS OF THE REGISTERED OFFICE AND PRINCIPAL OFFICE (IF ANY) OF CORPORATE PERSON	5M/655, GROUND FLOOR, OMBR LAYOUT, BANASWADI, BANGALORE NORTH, BANGALORE, KARNATAKA, INDIA, 560043
6	LIQUIDATION COMMENCEMENT DATE OF CORPORATE PERSON	18th March 2024.
7	NAME, ADDRESS, EMAIL ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND THE REGISTRATION NUMBER OF THE LIQUIDATOR, AUTHORISATION FOR ASSIGNMENT (AFA) Validity	CS SRINIVAS THATIKONDA Insolvency Professional No. IBBI/IPA-002/IP-N00631/2018-2019/11886 Flat No. 006, Nanda Ashirwad Apartments No.1, Canara Bank Colony, 2nd Main, Chandra Layout, Bengaluru-560 072, Karnataka, India. Land Line: +91 80 23390132 Mob: +91 9538869662 E-Mail: srinivas@srinivasthatikonda.com AFA Valid upto 06/11/2024
8	LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS	17th April 2024

Notice is hereby given that HKMEDIAGO SOLUTIONS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED has commenced voluntary liquidation on Monday, 18th March 2024.
The stakeholders of HKMEDIAGO SOLUTIONS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED are hereby called upon to submit a proof of their claims, on or before 17th April 2024 to the liquidator at the address mentioned against item 7.
The financial creditors shall submit their proof of claims by electronic means only. All other stakeholders may submit the proof of claims in person, by post or by electronic means.
Submission of false or misleading proofs of claim shall attract penalties.
Sd/-
Date : 18-March-2024
Srinivas Thatikonda
Place : Bangalore
Liquidator

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Sri. Chandrashekar, S/o. Sri. Deva Rao has intending to purchase of the schedule property mentioned hereunder for a valuable consideration from its owner Sri. K. Shekar, S/o. Sri. Kannaiya .K, Residing at # 55,1st Main, Nandi Woods Noble Residency, B. G. Road, Bangalore- 560076.
If any persons, banks, financial institutions etc., having any claims, right, title and interest whatsoever over the schedule property may forward their objections to the undersigned in writing with supporting documents of your such claims, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which it will be deemed that there are no claims, right, title and interest by anybody and my client will proceed for completion of sale transaction and thereafter no claims will be considered.
SCHEDULE
All that piece and parcel of the Plot bearing No. 7, BBMP Form-B, bearing Serial No. 5989, PID No. 46/4-7 formed in Sy. No. 46/4, situated at Begur Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Presently, comes under BBMP Limits, measuring East to West 30 Ft, North to South 40 Ft total measuring 1200 Sq. Ft and bounded on the : East by : Property of Padmavathi, West by : Site No. 6, North by : Private property, South by: Road.
MANJUNATHA & ASSOCIATES
K. N. MANJUNATHA CHARY, ROOPA. B,
& B.N. JAGADISH KUMAR, Advocates,
# 96, 1st Floor, 1st Main, 4th Cross,
Maruthi Nagar, Madiwala, Bangalore- 68,
Mob: 9845965626, 7406090832
Bangalore, Date : 18-03-2024

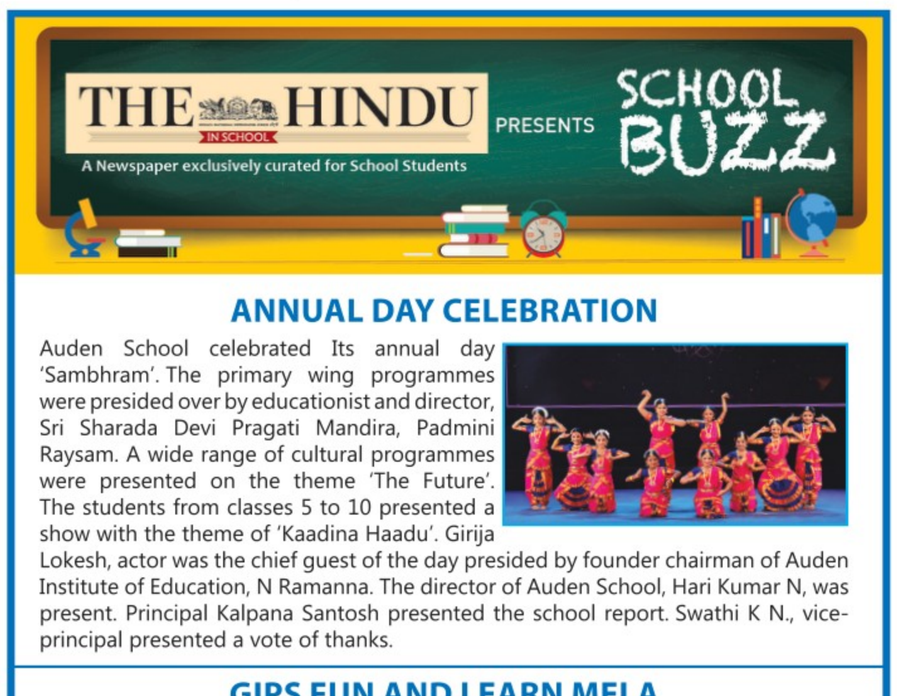
EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No. STCVSKP-7El-Alt-OT112, Dtd.: 07.03.2024
Name of work: SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, DESIGN & COMMISSIONING OF ALTERATION IN EXISTING ELECTRONIC INTERLOCKING (DISTRIBUTED) OF M/S MEDHA SERVO DRIVES PVT. LTD. AT JEYPORE (JYP) & KARAKAVALASA (KVLS) STATIONS, M/S MEDHA SERVO DRIVES PVT. LTD. (CENTRALISED) AT MANABAR (MVF) & JARATI (JRT) STATIONS, M/S SIEMENS RAIL AUTOMATION PVT. LTD. AT PADUA (PFU) & BODDAVARA (BDVR) STATIONS, M/S KYOSAN INDIA PVT. LTD. AT SUKU (SXV) STATION IN CONNECTION WITH DOUBLING BETWEEN KOTTAVALASA (KTV)-KIRANDUL (KRDL) SECTION IN KK LINE INCLUDING UTILITY SHIFTING (LC GATE, CABLES, LOCATION BOXES, OTHER SIGNALLING & TELECOMMUNICATION GEARS INFRINGING NEW LINE IN STATION SECTION) AT JEYPORE, MANABAR, KARAKAVALASA, JARATI, PADUA, BODDAVARA & SUKU STATIONS IN WALTAIR DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.
Approx cost of the work : ₹ 10,95,21,889.25, EMD/Bid Security: ₹ 6,97,600/-, Completion period of the work : 24 Months.
Tender closing date & time : at 1500 hrs. of 08.04.2024.
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website www.ireps.gov.in. The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.
The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents.
Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer
PR-130/CG/23-24 (Construction), Koraput

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY G20
E-Tender Notice No.Y/E.29/2023-24/78 Dated: 12-03-2024.
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Description of work	Approx. Value
Provision of Passenger amenities and renovation of existing station building at Mosalehosahalli (MHL) Halt station.	Rs. 8,44,575/-

Last date for submission of bids : Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 03-04-2024
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer Mysuru
PUB/755/AAD/PRB/SWR/2023-24
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(An Autonomous Institute under Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India)
Paschim Boragaon, Garchuk, Guwahati-781035
Advt. No. 475 Date :18.03.2024
RECRUITMENT NOTICE
Applications are invited for the position of Post-Doctoral Fellow (PDF) under Physical Sciences Divisions.
For advertisement, application submission and other details, please visit the Institute's website: www.iasst.gov.in
Registrar, IASST



ANNUAL DAY CELEBRATION

Auden School celebrated Its annual day 'Sambhram'. The primary wing programmes were presided over by educationist and director, Sri Sharada Devi Pragati Mandira, Padmini Raysam. A wide range of cultural programmes were presented on the theme 'The Future'. The students from classes 5 to 10 presented a show with the theme of 'Kaadina Haadu'. Girija Lokesh, actor was the chief guest of the day presided by founder chairman of Auden Institute of Education, N Ramanna. The director of Auden School, Hari Kumar N, was present. Principal Kalpana Santosh presented the school report. Swathi K N., vice-principal presented a vote of thanks.

GIPS FUN AND LEARN MELA

Gangothri International Public School organised 'GIPS Fun and Learn Mela'. The Mela was inaugurated in the presence of chairman Vivek Girigowda, principal Shubhada Warake, academic head Bharati Tanweer and vice-principal Aparna Udayaravi. There was a diverse range of attractions, with something captivating to every visitor. A vibrant array of activities spanning the English, Kannada, and Hindi languages were displayed.

GRADUATION CEREMONY

The grade 10 Graduation Day was held at National Hill View Public School, Banashankari. The event, organised by the grade 9 students, marked an occasion for the outgoing seniors. The two-day event had nostalgic moments, fun activities and heartfelt farewells. On day one, the festivities commenced with a Walk of Pride, where grade 10 students strolled through the school corridors one last time. The following day, grade 9 students orchestrated a series of informal activities to ensure a memorable experience for their seniors. Aisshwarya DKS Hegde, trustee secretary of Schools, was the chief guest. Principal Liju P Alex, was the guest of honour. Ms Aisshwarya imparted valuable lessons on the importance of knowledge and wisdom in daily life.

For Subscription related queries, please contact Raghavendra Desai:
Handphone:+91 9986196254 | Email: desai.rnb@thehindu.co.in

Geologists can't agree when the Anthropocene began, but it did

A closer examination of the archaeological and historical antecedents of human impacts reveals that while humans have left an indelible mark on the natural environment over the ages, they reached a state of heightened activity only since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution

C. P. Rajendran

Experts have rejected a proposal to mark the start of the Anthropocene Epoch in 1952, when the first layer containing radioactive fallout from Cold-War hydrogen bomb tests formed. The photograph shows a moment from the U.S.'s Castle Bravo thermonuclear weapon test on March 1, 1954. U.S. GOVERNMENT

Scientists recently proposed formalising an 'Anthropocene Epoch' on the geologic time scale, triggering several debates.

The earth's geological history is divided into multiple epochs depending on their natural character. We are officially currently in the Holocene Epoch, which started around 11,700 years ago. But many scientists believe the Holocene Epoch has ended and the Anthropocene Epoch has started - a period of time characterised by humankind's large-scale effects on the earth, including climate change and pollution.

The proposal - to make the Anthropocene Epoch official - came from the Anthropocene Working Group of the Sub-commission of Quaternary Stratigraphy (SQS-AWG). In the proposal, the group has said the start date of the Epoch can be linked to the formation of a particular layer of the ground. As the earth's surface evolves, new layers of rock, soil, and other materials are deposited on old ones. Each layer, or stratum, is thus a marker of a previous era.

The SQS-AWG is a commission responsible for recognising time units within our most recent period of geologic time. Its members have been looking into the question of formalising the Anthropocene Epoch as the youngest epoch, superposing the Holocene. On March 4, 2024, the commission, which consists of topical experts, rejected the proposal with a majority voting against it. They believed that adding a new Anthropocene Epoch and ending the Holocene Epoch was not supported by the scientific standards geologists follow to define geological time intervals. But the rejection did not settle the issue.

How long has the Epoch been under study?

The Dutch atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen coined the term 'Anthropocene'. Dr. Crutzen had won a Nobel Prize in 1995 for his discovery of the ozone hole in the earth's atmosphere and its cause. Five years later, at a meeting during the 15th Scientific Committee meeting of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, he co-authored an article with marine biologist Eugene Stoermer in a newsletter. Here, he defined a putative geological epoch to mark the start of human's transformation of the planet. Later, thanks to an article in *Nature* in 2002, Dr. Crutzen was able to garner wider acceptance for his neologism. He also suggested the onset of the Anthropocene Epoch coincide with the Industrial Revolution from the late 18th century.

There are conceptual antecedents of the term 'Anthropocene' in older literature. In *Man and Nature* (1864), the American polymath George Pekins Marsh presented perhaps the first major, and prescient, discussion of the anthropogenic changes wrought by human activities. The Italian geologist and priest Antonio Stoppani, in a book published between 1865 and 1870, referred to an "Anthropozoic" era in stratigraphic terms.

At the close of the nineteenth century, Svante Arrhenius and Thomas Chamberlain were exploring the relationship between carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere and global warming. In an article published posthumously by the journal *American Scientist* in January 1945, Vladimir I. Vernadsky, the Russian-Ukrainian geoscientist defined the "Anthropogenic Era'" in rather optimistic terms. In those heady days of Soviet communism, man/woman was expected to always be able to triumph over nature.

When was the Epoch to commence?

The rejected proposal, which has been in discussion for many years, suggested commencing the Anthropocene Epoch in 1952, when the first layer containing radioactive fallout from Cold-War hydrogen bomb tests formed. Those opposed to the proposal have argued that large-scale, anthropogenic changes have been in the making for millennia and can't be ascribed to singular events.

The proposal also risked sowing confusion about the deep history of how humans are transforming the planet. The human impact was evident when the sabre-toothed cats began to disappear from North America and the woolly mammoths from Siberia about 10,000 years ago. Human activities also became more visible in the 'fertile crescent' of West Asia midway through the Holocene Epoch, about 6,000 years ago, with the rise of agriculture and deforestation to make way for farmland.

Since then, humans have developed many technologies capable of manipulating the environment, including mechanisation, irrigation, groundwater extraction, damming, and the industrial production of nitrogen-rich fertilisers. Even around 1850, the concentrations of two major greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide and methane, were rising at an accelerated rate. These compounds can modify the environment such that it becomes unfriendly to many forms of life.

> As the earth's surface evolves, new layers of rock, soil, and other materials are deposited on old ones. Each layer, or stratum, is thus a marker of a previous era

Significance of post-Industrial era?

However, a closer examination of the archaeological and historical antecedents of human impacts reveals that while humans left an indelible mark on the natural environment over the ages, they reached a state of heightened activity only since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. For example, consider four important markers of the Anthropocene Epoch.

The first is temperature - specifically, the predicted increase in the global average surface temperature, at least by 1.1 degrees but possibly by as much as 6.4 degrees C by the end of this century (which would be an all-time high since the last thermal maximum 40 million years ago). Second, the quickening extinction of various species at a scale similar in magnitude to a major extinction event that occurred 80 million years ago.

Third, a dramatic increase in the erosion and the denudation of continents, at a pace an order of magnitude greater than what one would expect from purely natural processes. Finally, both accelerating urbanisation, land-use changes, and pro-urban migration have been accompanied by perennial water depletion and shortage. Over the last century or so, many major rivers that have been dammed and diverted have lost their water-carrying capacity.

While the SQS-AWG rejected the proposal to use the stratigraphic marker corresponding to the radioactive fallout, it need not reject the possibility of an Anthropocene Epoch or a representative stratigraphic period altogether. The Epoch may well have begun with the Industrial Revolution, around 1760. The resulting evidence of human impact is now preserved in geological material in the form of fallout from nuclear bomb tests as well as microplastics, pesticides, the bodies of invasive species, and more.

In fact, the argument that the rejection of the Anthropocene Epoch proposal is because of the fairly recent date of commencement and its shallow depth misses the larger picture. When Dr. Crutzen proposed the term 'Anthropocene', it was an accepted fact that humans had been altering the functioning and geological record of the earth, but it wasn't until the 18th century that the whole earth system began to rapidly destabilise, posing an existential threat to all biological entities in less than a century.

The information drilled from glaciers and ice-sheets adds to this picture: the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and global temperature surged sharply and unprecedentedly for the first time in the post-Industrial era as well as in 30,000 years. Even if the human-induced increase began millennia ago, it entered a new phase in this century - a phase that has also brought to bear consequences that are unique to this century.

(C.P. Rajendran is an adjunct professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, and director of the Consortium for Sustainable Development, Inc., Connecticut.)

Hundreds of plastic chemicals are being found in people and some of them are linked to adverse health outcomes. GETTY IMAGES

Plastic chemicals more than estimated: report

Reuters

At least 3,000 more chemicals are in plastics – from food packaging to toys to medical devices – than previously estimated by environmental agencies, a report published on Thursday found, raising questions over pollution and consumer safety.

While the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had previously identified around 13,000 plastic chemicals, the report by a team of European scientists found more than 16,000 chemicals in plastics – a quarter of which are thought to be hazardous to human health and the environment.

The report, funded by the Norwegian Research Council, comes as government negotiators grapple with devising the world's first treaty to tackle mounting plastic pollution, as some 400 million tonnes of plastic waste are produced every year.

"To robustly solve plastic pollution, you actually have to look at the full life cycle of plastics and you have to address the chemicals issue," said report co-author Jane Muncke, managing director of the Swiss nonprofit Food Packaging Forum.

That's because plastic chemicals can leach into water and food.

"We're finding hundreds, if not thousands, of plastic chemicals in people now and some of them have been linked to adverse health outcomes," Muncke said.

Such impacts include fertility issues and cardiovascular disease.

Often producers don't know which kind of chemicals they have in their products and it comes from very complex value chains

"When we look into ... products that we're using on a daily basis, we usually find between hundreds, if not thousands of chemicals in an individual plastic product," said lead author Martin Wagner, an environmental toxicologist at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

While the plastics industry has said any global treaty should promote recycling and re-use of plastic, only addressing plastic waste doesn't go far enough to protect people, the report's authors said.

Scientists flagged the need for greater transparency on what chemicals – including additives, processing aids, and impurities – are going into plastics - including recycled products.

A quarter of the identified chemicals lack basic information on their basic chemical identity, the report said.

"At the core of the problem is the chemical complexity of plastics," said Wagner, who also serves on the board of the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty.

"Often producers don't really know which kind of chemicals they have in their products and that comes from very complex value chains." Only 6% of the chemicals found in plastics are regulated internationally. Without regulatory pressure, "there is no motivation to disclose what's in the plastics," he said.

That's something a plastics treaty could help to address. Negotiations continue next month in Ottawa, Canada, with the aim of finalising a treaty come December in the South Korean city of Busan.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Coral bleaching: how reefs lose their vitality

Suresh Seshadri

QUESTION 1

What is the name of the coral reef system that was in the news most recently for a significant bleaching event? Hint: It was declared a World Heritage Site in 1981.

QUESTION 2

_____ _____ is the leading cause of coral bleaching. The phenomenon is called so because when the cause plays out, the corals expel the zooxanthellae living in their tissues and turn white or some pale colour. Fill in the blanks.

QUESTION 3

The creatures primarily responsible for building reefs are called coral _____. Fill in the blank with the name of a group of animals under the phylum Cnidaria. They are sac-like creatures that are attached to some surface (or other polyps) with the free end bearing a mouth surrounded by small tentacles.

QUESTION 4

This Australia-based marine scientist, who began with research work on coral reefs in the Caribbean in the 1970s, is widely considered to be the foremost authority on coral reefs. For his efforts to protect coral reefs, Nature dubbed him the "reef sentinel" in 2016. Name the scientist.

QUESTION 5

Coral reefs, particularly those in shallow, coastal waters, are biodiverse and help protect coastlines from erosion. For this reason, they also go by another name. What is it?

Answers to March 12 quiz:

1. Classical Japan cold dish served between 800 and 1200 AD – **Ans: Kakigori**
2. Substance added to water to encourage freezing, used to prepare sorbets in 1600s – **Ans: Salt**
3. Dish named for Persian for 'covered up', originating in 16th century Delhi – **Ans: Kulfi**
4. Substance added to prepare ice cream in minutes – **Ans: Liquid nitrogen**
5. Type of mixture that is ice cream – **Ans: Colloid**

Visual: **Ostwald ripening**

First contact: K.N. Viswanathan | Muhammed Shahid Suri

Visual: This place in Polynesia in the Pacific Ocean protects extensive coral reefs, including some of the oldest and largest Porites coral heads in the world. Name it. PUBLIC DOMAIN

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Nameboard law: No sealing of premises, HC tells State government

Petitioners questioned the legality of the Kannada Language Comprehensive Development Act's provision that mandates nameboards of private establishments to be 60% in Kannada

FROM THE COURT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Monday directed the State government not to suspend the trade licence and seal the premises of private establishments for not changing the display to 60% in Kannada on the upper half of nameboards, if the date for implementing the amended Section 17(6) of the Kannada Language Comprehensive Development Act, 2022, is notified in the official gazette.

However, the court restrained the government and its agencies from taking any precipitative action against private establishments for not complying with the amended law, if the government has not notified the date for implementation of the Act in the official gazette.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the interim order on a joint petition by the Retailers Association of India, Mumbai, Titan Company Ltd., PVR INOX Ltd., Aravind Lifestyles Brand Ltd., Infinite Retail Ltd., Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd., Hennes and Mauriz Retail Ltd., and Hardcastle Restaurants Pvt. Ltd.

Though the court refused to stay the operation of the amended law, the court said the Act has provision for imposing only penalty, ranging from ₹5,000 for not displaying the nameboards, but the law does not empower the government to suspend the trade licence or seal the premises for violation.

Earlier, the petitioners' advocate Manu Kulkarni pointed out that the circular issued by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) empowers the officials to suspend the trade licence and seal the business premises contrary to the Section 23 of the Act, which prescribe only fine as penalty for violation.

The amended Act was notified in the gazette this February 26 on obtaining assent from the Governor on February 25, and Section 1 (2) of the amended Act states that "it shall come into force on such date as the State government may by notification in the Official Gazette appoint".

But the government is yet to issue official gazette notification as per Section 1(2) announcing the date from which the amendment will come into force, the advocate contended. As the petitioners pointed out a lack of clarity on signboards, the Advocate General assured the court that all the retailers and the business undertakings would be given complete clarity as and when any clarifications are sought for.

Petitioners' contention

It has been contended in the petition that Section 17 (6) is a violation of Article 345 of the Constitution, which does not permit imposition of language on private parties for the purposes and functions that are not official functions of the State.

The imposition of 60% Kannada display on the upper half of nameboards is also violative of commercial speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, besides contrary to the rights conferred to the petitioners under the Trade Marks Act, 1999.

Also, the petitioners have pointed out that the amended law compels them to expend huge amounts, time, and effort to introduce the changed nameboards resulting in wasted expenditure, which is unreasonable and unjustified.

Board exams: High Court reserves verdict on State govt.'s appeal

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A file photo of students writing an exam at the Government Model High School in Bengaluru.

A Division Bench of the High Court of Karnataka on Monday reserved its verdict on an appeal by the State government challenging the March 6 judgement of a single judge, who had quashed the government's decision for holding board exams for classes 5, 8, 9, and 11 without framing the rules.

Earlier, it was argued on behalf of the petitioner-associations of schools managements that the single judge had rightly quashed the notifications issued by the government in October 2023, for holding summative assessment-2 for classes 5,8, and 9, and annual exams for class 11 through the Karnataka State Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB).

The single judge had quashed the notifications while allowing the petitions filed by the Registered Unaided Private Schools' Management Association-Karnataka, Bengaluru, and the Organisation for Unaided Recognised Schools, Bengaluru.

The government, under any circumstance, could not have ventured into changing the examination system, without framing rules after consultation with the stakeholders by notifying the draft rules proposing change in the examination system under the Karnataka Education Act even if there is no detention or failing of student based on their performance in the exams, it was argued.

The Bench, comprising Justice K. Somashekar and Justice Rajesh Rai K, has reserved the verdict by asking the advocates to submit their written arguments.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, MAR. 19	
RISE 06:24	SET 18:30
RISE 13:54	SET 02:22
WEDNESDAY, MAR. 20	
RISE 06:24	SET 18:30
RISE 14:46	SET 03:10
THURSDAY, MAR. 21	
RISE 06:23	SET 18:30
RISE 15:37	SET 03:53

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	25
Mysuru	36	24
Bengaluru	34	22

Bengaluru Today
35°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist & haze. Day will be warm afternoon. Night will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
35°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and uneasy. Night will be pleasant.

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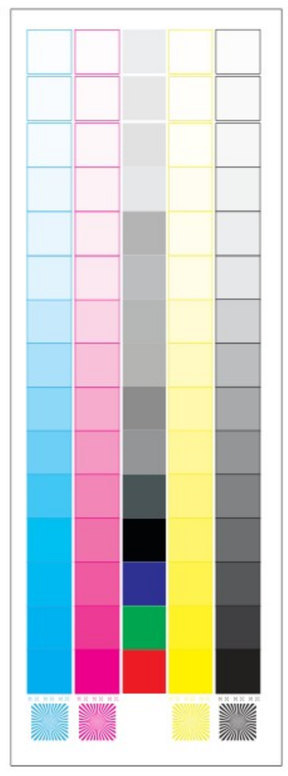

IndiGo daily flights to Agatti from March 31

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

IndiGo will start daily flight operations between Bengaluru and Agatti, Lakshadweep, effective from March 31.

The airline said that this new route will establish direct connectivity between these destinations and provide tourists with ease of accessibility, more flight options, and strengthen connectivity to and from Lakshadweep.

The flight will depart Bengaluru at 10.25 a.m. and arrive at Agatti at 1 p.m. and from Agatti the flight will depart at 1.20 p.m. and arrive at Bengaluru at 5.20 p.m.

Vinay Malhotra, head, global sales, IndiGo, said, "We are excited to announce Lakshadweep, India's smallest Union Territory, as IndiGo's 88th domestic destination. The natural landscapes, the sandy beaches and the abundance of flora & fauna are bound to attract people to explore the pristine beauty of the archipelago. The launch of these new flights would not only further strengthen Lakshadweep's position on the country's aviation map but also enhance travel & tourism. As India's leading carrier, we remain committed to delivering on our promise of providing affordable, on-time, courteous, and hassle-free travel experiences."

"One of the most popular islands of Lakshadweep, Agatti Island is a 6 km long land terrain blessed with aquatic diversity. Home to the archipelago's only airstrip, Agatti Island connects Lakshadweep to India," the airline said.

Belagavi and Hubballi among top five airports in AAI survey

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Two airports in the State have been ranked among the top five airports in the customer satisfaction survey conducted by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

As per the AAI's Customer Satisfaction Index of Airports for Round -II 2023 vis-a-vis Round-I 2023, the Belagavi airport secured the fourth spot and the Hubballi airport the fifth spot.

The survey takes into account 33 parameters which include: ground transportation to/from airport, parking facilities, availability of baggage carts trolleys, waiting time in check-in queue/line, efficiency of check-in staff, courtesy and helpfulness of check-in staff, thoroughness of security inspection, value for money of restaurant/eating facilities, comfort of waiting/gate areas, internet access/Wi-Fi, among others.

In addition, five questions related to hygiene (added because of the pandemic) are also part of the survey.

The Belagavi airport secured a score of 4.97 and the Hubballi airport secured a score of 4.95. There were a total of 58 airports as part of the survey with the Bhopal airport leading the table with a score of 5 on the index.

Two other airports in the State, Mysuru and Kalaburagi, also featured in the list securing 22nd and 29th positions respectively.

Man convicted of sending obscene video to wife

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The I Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court recently convicted a 45-year-old software engineer and sentenced him to one month simple imprisonment and a fine of ₹45,000 for allegedly sending a morphed pornographic video to his wife who was working in Canada in 2017.

The accused was idenfitied as Raghavan Sampath from Subramanyanagar.

Man held on charge of molesting minor

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Channapatana Rural police on Monday arrested a man who, posing as the brother of a minor girl, took her out of her hostel on the pretext of having tea and allegedly molested her.

The victim was staying in a hostel and pursuing her high school studies, while the accused was a local resident.

The incident came to light when the hostel staff, realising that the duo did not return after two hours, alerted the police. After an hour-long search, the staff caught the duo in a mango grove and handed them over to the police.

A probe revealed that the accused befriended the victim and was sexually exploiting her for the last one year.

According to the police, this incident also exposed lack of security checks at the hostels, especially women hostels.

The police advised the staff to be more careful in the future and are further investigating.

Meeting held on quality ecosystem

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State-level committee meeting on 'Standardisation and Quality Ecosystem for Karnataka' was held at the Vikasa Soudha on Friday.

According to an official release, the committee discussed topics such as the identification of areas for formulations of New Indian Standards, identifying the products, processes and systems for ensuring compliance with Indian Standards, among others.

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Decline in TCS shares amid rumours of Tata Sons selling stake

2 in percentage. As per reports, Tata Sons is planning to sell up to 2.3 crore shares, representing a 0.64% stake in the company through block deals. The offer price for the block deal is likely ₹4,001 per share, which is a 3.45% discount compared to Monday's closing price. PTI

The vote share with which Vladimir Putin won the election

87.28 Western governments lined up to condemn Vladimir Putin's landslide election victory as undemocratic and unfair, but China, India and North Korea congratulated the Russian leader. AGENCIES

Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan sentenced to prison

7 years. Seven people, including Azam Khan, were booked in 2019 for the forced demolition of a house in 2016 when the SP was in power in Uttar Pradesh. Khan is currently serving a sentence in the Sitapur jail in another criminal case. PTI

The arms containers shipped to Russia from North Korea

7,000 South Korea's defence minister said North Korea shipped around 7,000 containers of arms to Russia to use in its war with Ukraine since the transfers began around last July. AFP

The tepid growth in India's IT sector in FY25, says ICRA

3-5 In percentage. Indian IT sector's revenue growth is expected to come at a tepid 3-5% in FY25 and the sector's hiring will "remain muted" in the near term until growth picks up, ICRA Ratings said. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On FTAs with European countries

What are the key components? For trading partners, is a Free Trade Agreement with India attractive because they can surpass India's high tariff walls to access a large market? What are the other challenges at a time of rising protectionism across both developed and developing countries?

EXPLAINER

R.V. Anuradha
Ajay Srivastava

The story so far:

The India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) is the latest in India's recent Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). As its name suggests, the thrust of the FTA is deeper economic engagement with the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries – Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. It heralds the westward tilt of India's FTAs, being the first with any European country and the western world.

What does this mean?

The successful conclusion of an FTA with developed countries including Switzerland and Norway is a significant positive signal to the world, showcasing India's firm commitment to trade liberalisation at a time of rising protectionism across both developed and developing countries. For trading partners, an FTA with India is very attractive since it represents surpassing India's high tariff walls to access a large market. The TEPA negotiations started almost 15 years back; however, these were rapidly concluded in the last few months, close on the heels of the swift conclusion of FTAs with Australia and the UAE. The FTAs with the U.K. and the EU are also reportedly at an advanced stage.

What are the key features of TEPA?

Investment: TEPA sets out a target of a $100 billion investment into India from EFTA countries, and consequent one million jobs over a 15-year period. It also provides India the ability to withdraw its tariff concessions if such expected investment is not achieved. A closer look at the legal text reveals that for the promised investments and jobs to materialise, two conditions need to be met: India growing at a fast rate of 9.5%, and the return on EFTA investments in India exceeding 16% annually over the 15-year timeline. If not, both sides may lower their level of ambitions. If India is not satisfied, it can pull back its tariff concessions in a proportionate manner after 18 years. The investment chapter is not subject to dispute resolution and is overall, a statement of positive intent, and its benefits will be dependent on the private sector's responsiveness to the TEPA.

Trade in goods: the chief gain here is for EFTA's market, which can have more access to India due to tariff concessions. India is mandated to eliminate tariff on most products within seven to 10 years. This will benefit EFTA exports of seafood like tuna and salmon, fruits like olives and avocados, coffee capsules, oils like cod liver and olive oil, and a variety of sweets and processed foods including chocolate and biscuits. Also covered are smartphones, bicycle parts, medical equipment, clocks, and watches, many medicines, dyes, textiles, apparels, iron and steel products, and most machinery. Additionally, tariffs on cut and polished diamonds will be reduced from 5% to 2.5% in five years. For wines, India has extended tariff cuts as follows: wines priced between $5 and less than $15 will see a duty reduction from 150% to 100% in the first year, which will then decrease gradually to 50% over 10 years. For wines costing $15 or more, the initial duty cut is from 150% to 75%, eventually reducing to 25% after 10 years.

Gold, which accounts for 80% of the merchandise imports from EFTA countries, as well as dairy, soya, coal and some sensitive agricultural products have been excluded from India's tariff concession list.

Fresh start: Union Minister Piyush Goyal during the signing of the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, in New Delhi, on March 10. PTI

With regard to India's exports to EFTA, there will be no material impact since most products face very low or zero tariff for nations which have the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status in EFTA countries. For example, value wise, 98% of India's $1.3 billion merchandise exports to Switzerland are industrial products where tariff is already zero. The remaining 2% of India's exports are agricultural products, where gains would be negligible due to low trade values.

Trade in services: on services, both India and the EFTA members have committed to liberalisation across a wide range of sectors. Some key benefits for India include commitments by Norway for access to yoga instructors and practitioners of traditional medicine from India, subject to compliance with its legal framework. Both Norway and Switzerland have committed four and three years respectively for highly skilled Indian professionals moving as intra-corporate transferees, subject to obtaining work permits.

The nitty-gritties of actual service delivery are often impacted by regulatory requirements in each country. A separate annex in the TEPA lays the framework for easing the recognition of qualifications of service suppliers through streamlining the various requirements, including the possibility of achieving equivalence by topping up academic or training requirements, rather than having to repeat the entire professional degree. Separate annexes on financial services and telecom services similarly lay down disciplines that aim to enable ease of providing such services.

In a departure from previous FTAs of India, benefits of the trade in services chapter would extend to any juridical person (i.e., corporate entity) by merely being incorporated in an EFTA member, while having its actual operations in any other WTO member, including those with which India does not have FTAs. This will allow free riders benefiting from the TEPA. The investment chapter stems that risk by requiring benefits to be confined only to entities having substantial business activities within the EFTA; however, services related to commercial presence will be governed by the services chapter.

Sustainable development: the TEPA's chapter on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD), comprising commitments on environment and labour aspects, represents a first for India in any FTA. India has so far been sceptical of linking environmental and labour related issues within a FTA, given the concern that these may simply become proxies for protectionist measures. The TSD chapter refers to a range of multilateral environmental agreements and labour conventions, whose implementation is based on a balance of rights and obligations. For example, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Paris Agreement recognises differential obligations for developed and developing countries. Labour conventions under the International Labour Organization (ILO) are based on a tripartite framework involving the government, as well as organisations representing employers and employees. Even though the TSD chapter is not subject to dispute resolution, India will need to be careful that any scrutiny of its implementation of environment and labour obligations, which is inevitable under the TSD chapter, is respectful of the balance inherent in multilateral environment and labour conventions.

Intellectual property rights: the EFTA countries are home to several pharmaceutical and high technology MNCs, whose ask has been commitments on protection of intellectual property rights that exceed the WTO's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. The TEPA represents a nod to some of these. For example, India's Patents Act provides for pre-grant opposition of a patent application. The TEPA's IPR Annex requires swift rejection of "prima facie unfounded" oppositions. This potentially opens up India's internal regulatory process to external scrutiny on whether this standard was met. Similarly, a statutory requirement under Indian law is filing of an annual statement on working of a patent. The TEPA mandates that this periodicity be increased to three years, with annual statements to be required only in specified cases, which potentially raises the concern that the statutory requirement as it exists under Indian law, may need reconsideration to make it case specific. While amendments to India's patent rules have been notified on March 15, five days after the signing of the TEPA, FTA commitments should ideally have followed such amendments.

Overall, in a nutshell, the TEPA ventures into some uncharted territory. It's implementation over time will determine its impact.

R.V. Anuradha is Partner, Clarus Law Associates; Ajay Srivastava is Founder, Global Trade Research Initiative. Views are personal.

THE GIST

- The India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) is the latest in India's recent Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). As its name suggests, the thrust of the FTA is deeper economic engagement with the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries — Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.
- The chief gain here is for EFTA's market, which can have more access to India due to tariff concessions. India is mandated to eliminate tariff on most products within seven to 10 years.
- Gold, which accounts for 80% of the merchandise imports from EFTA countries, as well as dairy, soya, coal and some sensitive agricultural products have been excluded from India's tariff concession list.

Narendra Modi mocks 'many CMs' in a 'race to loot' State

Karnataka is left with no money to run the government, the Prime Minister says at a rally in Shivamogga; he appeals to people to ensure that the BJP-JD(S) alliance wins all 28 Lok Sabha seats

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with BJP leaders at an election rally in Shivamogga on Monday; (right) The Prime M inister arriving at the venue. PTI & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Alleging that the Congress has made Karnataka an "ATM for the party", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the State was left with no money to run the government.

Addressing a rally at Allama Prabhu Park in Shivamogga on Monday, Mr. Modi said there was "a race to be part of the loot." "There is one Chief Minister-in-waiting, someone is a Chief Minister-future-aspirant, someone is a super-Chief Minister, someone is a shadow-Chief Minister, and after all of them, there is one more Delhi-Collection-Chief Minister," he said.

He appealed to the people to ensure that the BJP and JD(S) alliance win all 28 Lok Sabha seats.

On 'Shakti'

Referring to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's speech at the INDIA convention in Mumbai on Sunday, Mr. Modi said that the INDIA alliance wanted to destroy "Hindu Shakti". "They have proposed to finish Shakti. We are worshippers of Shakti. The fight is between those who worship Shakti and those who wish to destroy Shakti," he said.

Mr. Modi said crores of people in the country worshipped Shakti. "I was in shock when I came to know that they spoke of destroying Shakti at Shivaji Park in Mumbai. This is the place where every child grows up chanting the slogan - Jai Bhavani, Jai Shivaji. I don't know how badly Balasaheb Thackrey's soul must have been hurt listening to such comments," he said. Further, Mr. Modi said every woman in the country would represent Shakti. He also referred to Kuvempu's poem, where he referred to Karnataka as Mantra Kana, Shakti Kana, Taayi Kana, Devi Kana.

Incidentally, under attack for his "fight against Shakti", Mr. Gandhi clarified that he was not talking about any religious power but the shakti of unrighteousness, corruption, and falsehood. At a rally in Mumbai, Mr. Gandhi commented that the "fight against Modi is not on a personal level since Modi is a 'mask' who works for a 'shakti' (power)."

Divide and rule

At Shivamogga, Mr. Modi said the Congress had been following the British's divide and rule policy. "They divide people based on caste, religion, and community. However, they are not yet satisfied. They are playing the dangerous game of dividing the country. A Congress MP has given a statement to divide again. Instead of throwing him out of the party, they are protecting him," he alleged, referring obliquely about D.K. Suresh's comment that the southern States may have to seek a separate country over the injustice meted out to them in allocation of funds.

Eshwarappa skips rally

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

K.S. Eshwarappa

BJP leader and former Minister K.S. Eshwarappa, who declared his candidature for the Shivamogga Lok Sabha seat as an Independent candidate, skipped Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally in Shivamogga on Monday. However, the party had displayed his portrait on the dais along with that of other party leaders in Shivamogga district.

Senior leaders of the BJP had offered a formal invitation to Mr. Eshwarappa for the rally. However, he had turned down the invitation, stating that he would not attend the programme. He made it clear that his contest was not against Mr. Modi but to cleanse the party. Mr. Eshwarappa visited temples and religious institutions at Bhadravati on the day.

Meanwhile, former Minister Kumar Bangarappa, who maintained distance from the BJP since his defeat in the Assembly polls last year, attended the rally. Mr. Bangarappa had not been taking part in BJP programmes the last year. There were reports that he would join the Congress and contest for Shivamogga Lok Sabha seat on Congress ticket.

However, senior BJP leaders maintained that Mr. Bangarappa would not quit. Mr. Bangarappa's participation in the BJP's campaign meeting has gained significance as his sister Geetha Shivarajkumar is the Congress candidate for Shivamogga.

CM asks if farmers' conscience will allow them to vote for BJP

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Asking farmers if their conscience would allow them to vote for the BJP that has meted out "injustice" in irrigation projects, drought relief, and in not increasing man days under MGNREGA, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said that in the past former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa had promised to waive loans but refused to do so once assuming power.

"The BJP in its manifesto in 2018 had promised to waive loans of farmers in nationalised banks up to ₹1 lakh. After coming to power, Mr. Yediyurappa had asked if he had a note printing machine to fund the waiver. When farmers sought fertilizers, he had ordered police firing in which farmers died. Will your (farmers) conscience allow you to vote for the son of Mr. Yediyurappa?" he asked, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a rally in Shivamogga from where B.Y. Raghavendra is contesting.

Mr. Siddaramaiah said: "It has been over six months since drought was announced in the State and I have written several letters to the Centre to release ₹18,177 crore as drought relief. I have met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, but not a paise has been released so far. Why does the BJP hate farmers?" The Centre has not responded to the request to increase man days from 100 days to 150 days under MGNREGA, he added.

Rumblings in JD(S)-BJP alliance over Kolar seat; HDK says party will contest from 3 places

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

JD(S) national president H.D. Deve Gowda addressing party workers in Bengaluru on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The rumblings in the Janata Dal (Secular) and BJP alliance over the Kolar seat and ignoring JD(S) leaders in BJP electoral campaign launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, came to the fore on Monday as JD (S) leaders expressed dismay over the party and its leaders being "sidelined" despite being part of the NDA.

Emergency meeting

Under pressure from JD(S) leaders, party State president and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy announced that the party candidates will contest from Hassan, Mandya, and Kolar Lok Sabha constituencies.

While leaders complained over the JD(S) not being taken into confidence before the BJP declared candidates for 20 Lok Sabha seats, party leaders at the emergency core committee meeting held here took exception to the BJP not inviting former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and Mr. Kumaraswamy or any of the party leaders to the electoral campaign launched by the Prime Minister from Kalaburagi. While the JD(S) has been claiming that it would contest from Hassan, Mandya, and Kolar as part of the seat-sharing arrangement for the past month, recent moves from the BJP to field its candidate has riled the JD(S). Mr. Deve Gowda, election observers appointed for Lok Sabha constituencies, and district-level leaders took part in the meeting.

Though he claimed that there is no confusion in the alliance, a visibly upset Mr. Kumaraswamy told press-persons after the meeting: "Should I make this kind of effort to get two seats in the alliance? We did not ask for six or seven seats. We asked for three or four seats. The BJP also knows our strength. Even today if we contest independently in Hassan and Mandya constituencies, we will win in a triangular fight." He said that Karnataka politics was different from elsewhere in the country, and expressed unhappiness over the delay over Kolar seat.

On the discussions in the meeting, Mr. Kumaraswamy said: "Our leaders felt that at the ground level, party leaders should be treated with respect and if they are ignored, there could be consequences. Though we may not benefit much, the BJP will benefit from us in 18 Lok Sabha seats and a 4% to 5% swing in votes will help the BJP."

Sources said that leaders at the meeting questioned Mr. Kumaraswamy over the drastic reduction of seats for the party in the alliance. While Mr. Deve Gowda asked Mr. Kumaraswamy to speak to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda, he offered to meet the Central BJP leaders to sort out the issue.

EC makes seizures worth over ₹15.53 crore

The Hindu
BENGALURU

The Election Commission has made total seizures worth over ₹15.53 crore in the last 24 hours. With this, the total seizures since March 16 when the Model Code of Conduct came into force in Karnataka touched ₹15.89 crore. This includes cash, liquor, drugs, and precious metals.

The amount of cash seized was ₹45.76 lakh, while liquor worth ₹15.37 crore and narcotics worth ₹56.64 lakh were seized, said a release. A total of 1,34,307 wall writings, posters, banners, and other defacements were removed from public property within 48 hours of announcement of elections.

BJP worried about undercurrent of dissidence as DVS too puts party in a spot of bother

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

D.V. Sadananda Gowda

Sadananda Gowda is upset over being denied party ticket

It is not just former Deputy Chief Minister K.S. Eshwarappa who has put the BJP in a spot of bother through his rebellion, as the party is concerned about the undercurrent of dissidence by other disappointed ticket aspirants refusing to die down in a slew of Lok Sabha constituencies.

Former Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda, who is upset over being denied party ticket, has stated that the Congress leaders are in touch with him and that he would announce his decision on the happenings in the party on Tuesday.

Mr. Gowda, who presently represents Bengaluru North Lok Sabha seat for which the party has chosen Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje as its nominee, publicly expressed displeasure over denying ticket to him. "I am pained because I was denied ticket though mine was the only name that was recommended for the constituency by the local leaders. Also, the party Central leaders had told me that in the entire State, mine was the only constituency which had recommended a single name," Mr. Gowda told media persons on the sidelines of a programme organised in Bengaluru to mark his birthday.

Pointing an accusing finger at the BJP State leadership, he said: "The BJP State leaders initially pushed me into contest though I was hesitant to continue in politics. But nobody came to my rescue later. They are trying to sacrifice me for somebody else's selfishness."

Admitting that the Congress leaders were trying to woo him, he said he would announce his decision on Tuesday after consulting his family members and going by by his conscience.

"There is nothing left in the BJP to say that it is a party with a difference," he said.

In Chikkodi, speculations were rife that the Congress leaders were in touch with the BJP's disappointed ticket aspirant Ramesh Katti, though Mr. Katti himself denied them. Haveri constituency, where former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has been fielded by the BJP, on Monday saw a verbal duel between the local BJP leaders right in front of Mr. Bommai at a poll-related meeting in Gadag.

Bidar, Tumakuru, Mysuru-Kodagu, Udupi-Chikkamagaluru, and Koppal constituencies too are facing heartburns among disappointed ticket aspirants though no one has publicly raised a banner of revolt in these constituencies. BJP insiders observe that if left unresolved, these heartburns may turn tricky for the party.

QR code on voter slips to help locate polling stations

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

Chief Electoral Officer of Karnataka Manoj Kumar Meena

Initiative will be made available in 43 urban Assembly constituencies

Voters in urban areas during the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls will have no reason to make excuses to not go to the polling station and cast their franchise. To help voters navigate their way to the polling station, the Election Commission will print QR codes on voter slips that will be distributed to the electorate one week before the polls. Voters can scan the QR code and find their way to the polling station.

Aimed at increasing voter turnout, this innovative initiative was used for the first time during the recent teachers constituency polls in Bengaluru. Manoj Kumar Meena, Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka, told *The Hindu* that with this initiative the polling percentage in Bengaluru teachers constituency election rose from 66% in 2020 to 86% in 2024.

"Although the target is to achieve cent percent polling, we are hopeful that the State's voter turnout will rise to 72% or beyond, higher than the 68% polling witnessed in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls," he said.

Stating that the QR code initiative will be made available in 43 urban Assembly constituencies, including Bengaluru, Mr Meena said: "It is difficult to locate a polling station in urban areas unlike in rural areas. People stay away from voting even if there is a slight disturbance. With the QR code, they can scan and navigate to the polling station easily."

Pointing out that urban areas usually record a lower turnout, Mr. Meena said around 5,000 polling stations have been identified where turnout remained low in previous elections. "We are targeting those booths that reported less than 30% voter turnout in the last elections. In BBMP limits alone, 3,000 such polling stations have been identified and we are trying to provide better facilities to improve voting percentage," he said.

Chunavana app

"Through the 'Chunavana' app, voters can find out whether there is parking space near the polling booth. Also, voters can check the number of people standing in the queue at the booth. Now, the QR code will help them locate their booth. We are leaving no stone unturned to increase voter turnout," Mr. Meena asserted.

He said elaborate booth-level election management plans are being made to increase voter turnout. "Each polling station has a unique issue and we are addressing them. In the Kalyan Karnataka region, we are taking special measures for heat because when the election happens it will be peak summer. A first aid kit for sunstroke will be made available at the polling stations. Also, ambulances will be deployed," he added.

Banks told to flag suspicious transactions

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The city administration held a meeting with representatives of all banks in the city on Monday and asked them to flag all suspicious transactions in the light of the Lok Sabha elections.

Banks have been directed to report transactions where money is being transferred from one account to multiple accounts through RTGS or UPI payments, flag all withdrawals over ₹1 lakh or any large deposits.

Banks have also been directed to flag any deposit or withdrawal of over ₹10 lakh to the Income Tax Department. Bank officials have also been instructed to transport cash either for ATM or between branches with adequate authorisation and documentation.

Siddaramaiah to leave for Delhi today

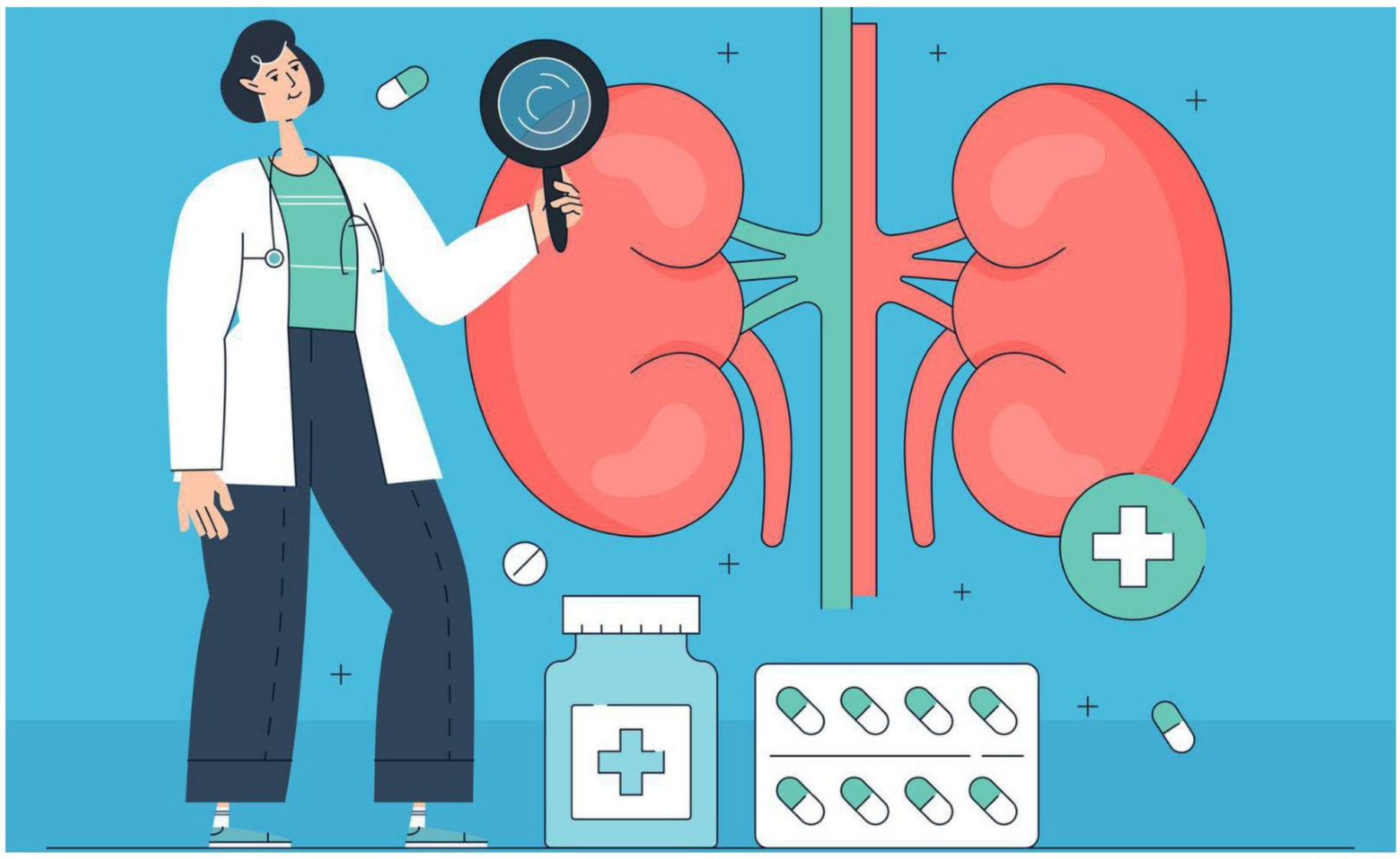
The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is heading for New Delhi on Tuesday to take part in the Central election committee meeting of the Congress for discussions on the Lok Sabha seats for which candidates are yet to be announced. The party is likely to announce the list of candidates for 21 constituencies this week. In the first list last week, it had announced candidates in seven constituencies.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE
DEATH ANNIVERSARIES
1st YEAR REMEMBRANCE on 19.03.2024

Mrs. KANIKA SUBRAMANIAN
DOD: 19.03.2023
Ever Loving Hearts
Husband: V. K. Subramanian GM/VSNL/Rtd.,
Daughter, Son in law,
Grand Children, Seattle, US
Great Grand Children & Relatives.
Ph: 9444465331

ABSTRACT



GETTY IMAGES

Understanding dialysis outcome patterns in India through a nationwide study

Findings from a nationwide private haemodialysis network show that there is a variation in the survival of patients receiving haemodialysis in India depending on various factors; and stress on the need to standardise dialysis care across centres

Ramya Kannan

Hockman et al, 'Centre-level variation in the survival of patients receiving haemodialysis in India: findings from a nationwide private haemodialysis network', *The Lancet Regional Health-Southeast Asia*, March 13, 2024

The authors attempt to analyse the survival of patients undergoing dialysis at 193 centres in India. The primary outcome was all-cause mortality, measured from 90 days after joining a centre, using patient-level and centre-level characteristics. The findings indicate the need not only to scale up infrastructure for dialysis across the country, but also to standardise dialysis care and ensure lower mortality by doing so.

India has amongst the highest number of patients receiving chronic dialysis, globally estimated at around 1,75,000 people in 2018. On a daily basis, the number of patients on dialysis has been increasing. The authors notch this up to the launch of the National Dialysis Service in 2016 to improve access, and ongoing efforts to develop affordable dialysis systems, all underlined by the rising incidence of end stage renal disease in the country.

Before this study, there were no large studies examining survival in patients receiving haemodialysis in India, or considering centre-level effects on survival. As per the authors, the only, and largest study, conducted in Andhra Pradesh used claims data from a publicly-funded insurance scheme between 2008 and 2012 to describe outcomes amongst 13,118 beneficiaries, and found that 10.2% of patients died within six months of starting haemodialysis. However, there was limited opportunity in the study to examine whether differences in survival existed between dialysis centres, as has been shown in other countries. As a result, major gaps existed in the full understanding of dialysis outcome patterns in India, limiting efforts to improve care. There is also, as yet, no national benchmark for survival in patients receiving dialysis, they stated.

Measuring differences

The authors measured the differences in the survival rate between dialysis centres across India and evaluated the extent to which these differences are explained by centre-based characteristics. They found that centre- and patient- level characteristics are associated with survival, but there remains an unexplained variation between centres.

In this study, one of the largest of its nature, over 23,600 patients, undergoing haemodialysis at any centre in the NephroPlus network, for 90 days or more, between April 2014 and June 2019 were chosen. The primary outcome was all-cause mortality, measured from 90 days after joining a centre.

The individual-level variables included sex, smoking status, history of diabetes, history of heart disease or heart failure, history of hypertension, hepatitis B and hepatitis C in patients. Besides this, other categories such as education, monthly household income, dialysis frequency and vascular access were factored in for evaluation. The centre-level variables included frequency of nephrologist visits, number of beds, number of staff and number of patients.

Mortality rate

After accounting for multi-level factors, the estimated 180-day survival ranged between 83% and 97%. The mortality rate in patients attending rural centres was 32% higher than those at urban centres. This latter figure was likely due in part to unmeasured differences in patient characteristics. Nevertheless, it highlights the unique challenges faced by rural centres, the authors aver.

Among the patient characteristics associated with mortality were: catheter-based vascular access which had a higher mortality compared to access via an arteriovenous fistula or graft; also, financial support for dialysis treatment through a government panel scheme or private insurance had a lower mortality compared to out-of-pocket payment. There was an inverse relationship between mortality and dialysis vintage, with those receiving dialysis for at least a year prior to joining a centre having a 17% lower rate of mortality than those who started dialysis less than 30 days before joining. The presence of diabetes was associated with a higher mortality rate. By including centre-level factors in the analysis; for instance, staffing, processes of care and patient volume, they found it reduced the variability in survival across dialysis centres by 31%.

The way forward

The authors propose this as the first national benchmark for survival amongst dialysis patients in India. As India continues to widen dialysis access, ongoing quality improvement programs will be an important part of ensuring that patients experience the best-possible outcomes at the point of care. In future, it is clear that the number of patients in need of dialysis will increase.

While overall improvements in health infrastructure and care are essential to keep pace with the demand, the authors of the study underline the need for a collaborative quality improvement system across the country. Alongside establishing national standards for dialysis outcomes in India, it is important to understand the multilevel effects of centre- and patient-level characteristics on these outcomes, the authors add, in the paper. It has been shown, in nephrology and other medical specialities, that clinical practice patterns and patient outcomes vary substantially between centres. Therefore, establishing national benchmarks for dialysis outcomes against which the dialysis centres' performances and changes over time can be compared is essential to drive this, they say, arguing that their findings present the first step in this voyage.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Mr. R. Saravanan, Golden Rock, wants to know the meaning of the idiom 'to paint the town red.'"

" 'To paint the town red' means 'to have an enjoyable, noisy time; to cause some disturbance in town by having a noisy and a disorderly spree.' It is a colloquial expression of American origin.

After the final examination, the students painted the town red."

"Mr. G. D. Sharma, T. Nagar, Madras, wants to know which is correct: (a) dispossess of (b) dispossess for."

" It is 'dispossess of'. It means 'to deprive.'

They were dispossessed of their property."

"Mr. R. Sundar Raman wants to know the meaning of 'Man Friday.'"

" 'Man Friday' is a helper or a follower. This expression is from Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Crusoe finds a young savage on a Friday on the desert island. The savage becomes his faithful and willing servant and he was called Man Friday."

"Mr. L. Krishnaswami Bharati, Anna Nagar, Madras, wants to know the exact meaning of: riches, wealth, opulence."

" 'Riches' means 'abundant means, valuable possession.'

He amassed riches in a short period.

Wealth also means 'riches.' 'Wealth' implies a style of living in keeping with one's riches. 'Opulence' means 'very great and splendid wealth.' Opulence implies a showy display of wealth."

"Mr. C. Nagananda Rao, Triplicane, Madras, wants to know the origin of 'rightists' and 'leftists.'"

"In the French National Assembly of 1789, the reactionaries sat on the right, the democrats and the extremists on the left, and the moderates in the middle. The term leftist is applied now to socialists and communists, and rightist to conservatives. I do not know whether the words will undergo some change in meaning in the light of the recent 'revolutions' in East Europe. The people were against 'far-left hard-line' communists. Are they, therefore, rightists? Mr. Gorbachev has introduced some changes, but his opponents want to conserve communism. Who is a reactionary here? It is all confusing! Has left become right and right left? Is 'left' equal to 'right'? I would like to have readers' views on the present meaning of 'right' and 'left.'"

"Ms. Jayashree Pathak, Bhubaneswar, wants to know whether 'visit' and 'visit with' mean the same."

"No. 'Visit with' is an American expression. It is not an alternative to 'visit.' 'Visit with' means 'to chat,' 'to converse.' When you visit with someone, you take the trouble of going to someone for a friendly talk. 'Visit with' has connotations of friendliness.

I visited with him for an hour.

'Visit with' originated in the southern U.S. in the 19th century. Some British writers' have criticised 'visit with' without realising that it is an American idiom. Occasionally 'visit with' is used to mean 'to chat' without any visit!

I visited with him over the phone last week."

Published in The Hindu on June 18, 1991.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

From the start of the U.S.'s war on Iraq to the release of Bob Dylan's debut album, March 19 is an important day in world history. A quiz on all things that happened on this date

Adithya Narayan

QUESTION 1

President Woodrow Wilson signed an Act on this day in 1918 defining five time zones and their limits in the U.S. Name the Act and what is it related to?

QUESTION 2

Argentina mobilised troops against the British on this day in 1982 to stake claim to a set of islands in the South Atlantic Sea. The incident would spawn an eponymous war too. What is it called?

QUESTION 3

Name the African country that was suspended from the Commonwealth grouping on this day in 2002 over its government's human rights abuses, election rigging and undermining of the economy.

QUESTION 4

Known by the moniker 'Prophet of the Space Age', this British science fiction writer, who also co-wrote movies such as *2001: A Space Odyssey*, died on this day in 2008. Name him.

QUESTION 5

The leader of this former Soviet Republic announced his resignation on this day in 2019 after ruling over the country from various posts since its Independence in 1991. Name the leader and the country.

QUESTION 6

Founded in 1856, this European investment bank was among the least affected during the global financial crisis of 2008. However, on this day last year, the country's government had to broker a deal for another firm to buy it to prevent its collapse. Name the bank.

Visual question:

This former head of state survived a controversial shooting incident on this day in 2004 while campaigning on election eve, only to emerge victorious. Who is he? AP

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This month of the Islamic calendar is Ramzan. **Ans: Ninth Month. It follows 'Sha'ban'**

2. The Holy Koran says that eating and drinking are permissible in Ramzan during this time. **Ans: When the 'white thread of light becomes distinguishable from the dark thread of night at dawn'**

3. Traditionally, the fast is broken by eating this fruit. **Ans: Date**

4. The name of the festival that marks the end of Ramzan. **Ans: Eid al-Fitr**

5. The meaning of 'Ramadan Kareem'. **Ans: 'Generous Ramadan'**

6. In Ramadan, the reward for every good deed done is multiplied by this number. **Ans: 70**

7. Name the battle that took place in Ramadan 2 AH (March 624 CE). **Ans: Battle of Badr**

Visual: The name of the mosque. **Ans: Sultan Ahmed Mosque (Blue Mosque) in Istanbul**

Early Birds: C. Saravanan| Prashant Nain| Rajmohan V| Ashraf Basha

Word of the day

Blarney:
flattery designed to gain favour; influence or urge by gentle caressing, or flattering

Synonyms: sweet talk, coaxing, cajole, wheedle

Usage: *It took his blarney to keep us from being arrested.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/blarneypro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /'blɑːni/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Water woes of Bengaluru: Think long term, go beyond knee-jerk reactions, say experts

A recent BWSSB notification prohibits water use for washing vehicles, gardening, fountains, constructions and such other activities. It threatens violators with fines

Rasheed Kappan
BENGALURU

Women and children standing in the scorching heat to collect potable drinking water from a public tap, supplied by BWSSB, at Nayandahalli off Mysuru road. K. MURALI KUMAR

A man carrying water cans to get drinking water at farm in Hesarghatta.

Bengaluru's desperate dependence on an external drinking water source, while offering scant regard to alternatives, came out starkly in that one single notification. But is the latest Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) directive banning drinking water for non-essential uses a sign that the city is finally on track with a sound conservation strategy?

Not many are convinced. The notification, prohibiting water use for washing vehicles, gardening fountains, construction and roads, does threaten violators with ₹5,000 for first offence and an additional daily penalty of ₹500 thereafter. But for decades, lax enforcement of rules have had big players get away with massive misuse of the precious Cauvery water supplied to the city at great cost.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has admitted that Bengaluru is facing a shortage of 500 Million Litres per Day (MLD) water every day.

Lack of regulation

The clear lack of a regulatory mechanism to first put conditions on water usage and stringently enforce them is seen as a big problem. N.S. Mukunda from Bengaluru Praja Vedike notes, "You give permission to all these highrises just by saying that the Water Board will make its best efforts to supply water. You stop at that and do nothing, what is the use? You need to insist that they follow certain rules and procedures."

The ban imposed through the notification, he says, is only a temporary knee-jerk reaction of the government to see through the day as they have to manage with whatever water is available for the next two months. This is another proof of the absence of a long-term vision.

Ad-hocism can be risky

At a time when climate change is playing havoc with rainfall patterns, ad-hoc short-term reactions can get extremely risky. "Empirically speaking, we now see that over a five-year period, there will be at least two years of drought, one year of excessive rainfall and two years of normal rainfall," he points out.

The concretisation of wetlands and public spaces besides the white-topped roads have meant there are no long-term strategies. "It is critical to ensure some other ways to let groundwater recharge into the concrete. We are now doing the opposite. White-topped roads are totally impermeable to water, you can't even drill into that," says Harini Nagendra, who leads the Azim Premji University's Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability.

Climate change has meant there are extremes of excess water or too little water. "There are no average rainfall days left in our future. We should explore ways to let the excess water into the ground through the concrete. Maybe by drilling very small and very deep recharge tubes into the ground on roads, in government offices, in public places they should be doing this. It should be mandatory for the government to act first," she elaborates.

Another solution, as Mukunda says, could be to ensure that the city's storage capacity is twice the annual requirement. "That should be the first fundamental objective. Immediately after a drought year, you ration the supply for four hours per day in the morning and four hours in the evening. Do that and definitely you will not face a dire shortage problem," contends Mukunda.

Dual piping, tech tweaks

Dual piping for potable and non-potable / treated water is mandated for new constructions. But what about lakhs of older constructions? Is there a way to retrofit and boost consumption of treated water? Harini draws attention to Chennai, where strict enforcement of the dual-piping rule had dramatically addressed the drinking water crisis of the early 2000s. "We need to look at innovative tech fixes to look at older constructions," she says.

The Vedike had proposed a comprehensive water mapping of the city in terms of sources and capacity. The platform had also suggested that the ultimate ownership of the city's ground water resources should be the BWSSB, which then connects all ground water sources by pipeline and regulates the supply to people in dire need of drinking water.

The drinking water crisis might seem severe now. But the warning signs had begun to show up years back. But they were mostly ignored. At a Indian Institute of Science (IISc) conference in 2008, Mukunda recalls, the then BWSSB chairman had warned that if the city was allowed to grow without regulations, water would dry out by 2014. "He was made to shut up and sit down, and not allowed to speak further."

Impact on Cauvery 5th Stage

The current crisis is likely to impact the launch of the Cauvery 5th Stage. Although the initial plan was to kickstart the process of supplying drinking water to 110 villages on the city's outer areas by May, the linkage with the larger BWSSB pipeline network could take a year. Former BWSSB Engineer-in-Chief N Thippeswamy notes the prevailing storage crisis could delay it even more.

"In the context of the current storage levels, the commissioning of the fifth stage may not be possible till the next monsoon sets in," he says, drawing attention to a proper planning lacuna both at the government and BWSSB levels. "These are to be expected due to the impact of climate change. This will continue in the years to come. Both the Water Board and Government should seriously look at how best other water resources can be utilised to meet the demand."

Currently, BWSSB supplies 1,470 Million Litres per Day (MLD) of water daily to the city. Cauvery 5th stage is expected to boost this by an additional 775 MLD. The Board Chairman Ramprasath Manohar had recently stated that the city and its outskirts require a daily supply of 2,100 MLD. Insisting that there is no need to panic, he informed that the dams had 34 tmcft of water against the city's demand for 17 tmcft till July.

On March 12, the Board decided to reduce water supply by one to 20% to companies, hospitals, airports and the railways. This move to mitigate the crisis is expected to release more water to 257 areas identified as badly impacted by the water shortage. Among the regions are HSR Layout, Bommanahalli, Peenya, Balgagunte, KR Puram, Ramamurthy Nagar, Marathahalli, Hosakerehalli and D J Halli.

Follow Cape Town template

But does this give much confidence to Bengalureans, lakhs of whom on the outskirts are now reeling under the full impact of the crisis? Thippeswamy suggests following the Cape Town template, when that South African city hit global headlines in 2018 while being precariously close to Day Zero of running totally out of water.

The pushpack there started with a steep tariff penalising heavy users, prohibition of water for pools, lawns and non-essential use, and installation of a new water pressure system.

Restrictions were imposed on allocation of water to surrounding agricultural areas. Aggressive advertising on electronic boards reminded people how many days the water supply would last. City-wide water usage maps were released to help people compare their consumption with their neighbours.

These government mandated measures were complemented by active community efforts.

Social media users widely circulated water-saving tips, tourists were advised by hotels to take short showers and flush toilets only when required, and restaurants reduced making pasta and boiled vegetables.

Father donates kidney to save daughter's life

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The surgery was successfully carried out with fewer complications. GETTY IMAGES

N. Padmaja, a 32-year-old mother of two, was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease (CKD), leading to kidney failure. When everything looked bleak, her father N. Viswanatha Reddy stepped forward by offering his kidney to save his daughter's life.

This act laid the path for a remarkable journey that embodies hope and resilience.

According to the release by Manipal Hospital, Whitefield, under Dr. Vishnuvardhan B.R., Consultant-Nephrology & Transplant Physician, and Dr. Deepak J. Kaddu, Consultant-Urology & Robotic Renal Transplant, Ms. Padmaja was prepared for robotic-assisted kidney transplant, She underwent the surgery which was successfully carried out with fewer complications and better renal function. Within a week, she was discharged from the hospital.

Emphasizing on the importance of kidney transplants for younger patients with CKD, Dr. Vishnuvardhan B.R. said, "Life is difficult on dialysis. For a young woman with two children, we needed to provide longevity and good quality life. It was made possible with the help of kidney transplantation. Kidney transplantation provides longevity, less expenditure and good quality life."

Speaking about the advantages of robotic-assisted kidney transplants over open kidney transplants, Dr. Deepak J. Kaddu noted, "Robotic-assisted kidney transplants are associated with superior outcomes including shorter surgical duration, minimal scarring, reduced post-operative pain, and faster recovery, revolutionizing a new era in transplant surgery."

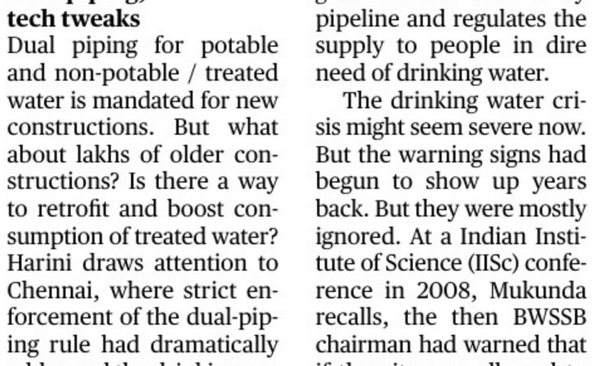
16th edition of Bengaluru International Arts Festival to pay tribute to Kumar Gandharva

It will also showcase a Hindustani vocal by Bhuvanesh Komkali, grandson of the legendary singer

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The five-day Bengaluru International Arts Festival (BIAF), 2024, will kick off on March 22 at Chowdiah Memorial Hall in Bengaluru with a Jugalbandi with Dr. Suma Sudhindra and Ronu Majundar at 6.30 p.m. and a Carnatic music performance by Abhishek Raghuram and troupe at 7.45 p.m.

The festival will commemorate the birth centenary of the legendary Pandit Kumar Gandharva, being observed this year. The fourth day of the BIAF festival will showcase Hindustani vocal by Bhuvanesh Komkali, Grandson of Kumar Gandharva, as a tribute to the legendary artiste, said a release from the organisers.



Pandit Kumar Gandharva

Bhuvanesh Komkali

Green Bengaluru

Some of the renowned artists performing at the 16th BIAF include Hindustani vocalists Sangeetha Katti, Venkatesh Kumar, among others. Other highlights include Pratibodhana - The Awakening, a dance production by Rama Vaidyanathan and team; Silapadhikarama, a dance drama conceptualised by Lalitha Das and choreographed by Veena Murthy Vijay, Marma, a multi-lingual and multi-genetic confluence of spiritual and philosophical poetry. Last day of the festival on March 31 will witness a sapling planting ceremony to promote "Green Bengaluru" engaging the community and college students. This year's musical events will take place from March 22 to 24 at the Chowdiah Memorial Hall and on March 30 at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Concluding on March 31, the festival will culminate with a sapling plantation ceremony.

Celebration of art

Organised by Artiste's Introspective Movement (AIM), BIAF, originated as a platform to unite artists, fostering collaboration and performance in the celebration of art. Held in association with Academy of Music, Department of Kannada & Culture, Government of Karnataka and supported by Ministry of Culture, Government of India, BIAF stands as a testament to Bengaluru's vibrant cultural landscape, said the release.

Dr. Veena Murthy Vijay, Director, BIAF, said, "This year's festival promises to be a harmonious blend of our timeless classical music, mesmerizing dance performances, and an abundance of celebration and joy. Grounded firmly in our rich tradition and culture, we aim to offer our music aficionados yet another chance to immerse themselves in the boundless ocean of music." Tickets available at BookMyShow

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 19, 1974

Karnataka Will Safeguard Medical Students' Interests

Bangalore, March 18. The Karnataka Health Minister, Mr. H. Siddaveerappa, assured both Houses of Karnataka Legislature today that the Government would take all steps to safeguard the interests of students in medical colleges in the State.

Mr. Siddaveerappa who was making a statement on the reported decision of the Indian Medical Association (IMC) on derecognition of half a dozen medical colleges in the State asked the students in those colleges and their parents not to get agitated by the reports. Urging members to join hands with him the Minister declared that the interests of the State and medical education were paramount.

The members expressed concern over the reported decision of the IMC.

ST Rise on Many Items Dropped in Karnataka

Bangalore, March 18: The budget proposal to increase the sales tax had been dropped on a number of items. Mr. M.Y. Ghorpade, Finance Minister, announced in the Karnataka Assembly while replying to the budget discussion today.

The items for which the concessions would apply were toilet soaps, ice and fruits, aerated water, bicycles, and tricycles and confectionery and biscuits (tax will remain at six per cent instead of proposed eight per cent), foot wear (four instead of six percent poultry feed and cattle feed and hides and skins (two instead of three per cent.

CITYBEATS

Welcome Friday

ONGOING
Called Italian Fridays, this menu offers you authentic Italian flavours and ingredients. From soups such as minestrone Milanese to salads, artisanal pizzas and mains in vegetarian and non-vegetarian options, the menu offers you a wide range to choose from.
At Lazy Suzy, Indiranagar. Call 25272737.

Past repast

ONGOING
Esplanade celebrates its 15th anniversary with dishes from the past, including delicacies from the British and Mughal era, and a few dishes cherished by Rabindranath Tagore. The menu is called A Taste of History: Beloved Classics Return for Esplanade's 15th Anniversary.
Dial 40927878 to book your table

Go sober

ONGOING
Roxie has launched its Sober Curious menu, to cater to those who like to enjoy a mindful drinking experience. These drinks include a range of zero and low-proof cocktails, crafted to deliver flavours without compromising on quality or taste.
At Roxie, HSR Layout

Putting together a jigsaw

On his second tour to India, this Scottish comedian aims to stir the pot by pushing the boundaries of what he can joke about

Sangita Rajan

Universal laugh language Daniel Sloss in a still from his Netflix special, Dark . SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

During a particularly rough week in 2018, when I was recovering from the flu, I discovered a Scottish comedian named Daniel Sloss. I dived into his two stand-up specials (*DARK* and *Jigsaw*) on Netflix. His dark, blunt and honest sense of humour kept me hooked.

In the second special, *Jigsaw*, he dwells on what love is, why we love and what it means to be truly in love. This unexpected comedy special, shattered my idea of love, and it turns out I was not alone. Soon after the special released on Netflix worldwide, word started reaching Daniel that couples were breaking up following his words of wisdom.

Daniel's bio on X reads "SPECIALS Daniel Sloss: X, SOCiO, *DARK*, *Jigsaw* (breakups 500K+ Divorces 1000+)", and the comic has autographed several divorce papers as well! "Jigsaw was quite culturally important for a lot of young Indians, because it's talking about not settling and looking for the best. I did not know it was going to have that impact. That's not why I wrote it," he says on a call from home in Scotland , from where he will be flying to India with his next stand-up special Can't. It touches upon subjects like cancel culture and the birth of his son.

This is Daniel's second tour to India. His first India tour in March 2023 covered only three cities – Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi – and sold out tickets for all three shows in under an hour. "Two months after the Netflix special came out, I said to my agent that we have got to do India. We just couldn't find the right people," he says. In 2023, Daniel performed in Mumbai as part of the Laughing Dead Comedy Festival by DeadAnt.

Once he left India, his fans hounded him on social media, asking him to return and perform in more cities. Ravina Rawal, the founder of DeadAnt says, "He was whinging and moaning on social media about wanting to come back to India, so we reached out to him and asked what he had in mind. Daniel is an ambitious man and wanted to do everything".

> Jigsaw was quite culturally important for a lot of young Indians, because it's talking about not settling and looking for the best. I did not know it was going to have that impact. That's not why I wrote it.
>
> **DANIEL SLOSS**
> Comedian

The eight-city tour in India, hitting Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Goa, Pune, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata, will be the biggest comedy tour by an International comic in India so far. This tour is organised by DeadAnt's new initiative Loop, which facilitates bringing big international comedy stars to India. Daniel will be the first comic to put this to test.

"Performing in India was brand new but still familiar. The response was electric when I met fans, but then on stage, it felt like performing pretty much anywhere else in the world. Most of the jokes were understood, and my accent wasn't as big an issue as I thought it would be," he says.

Travelling to different parts of the world and performing in places with varying cultures sets a challenge for a comic with a dark sense of humour. Sometimes the jokes land, and sometimes they offend and hurt the audience. Freedom of speech, in the context of stand-up comedy, in India, is infamously fussy, but Daniel takes that as a challenge. "I'm trying to do at least five minutes of local stuff because otherwise it would be a missed opportunity. I try to go to new places and offer my own view, because the one thing that is true for audience everywhere in the world is they like when somebody holds up a mirror in front of them and says 'This is what you look like to me'. Sometimes that's what offends people, but 99% of what I say comes with love."

Daniel filmed his special, Can't in Turkey last weekend, where, he says, one of his closing jokes did not land as expected. "Sometimes that is one of the difficult things to happen, but I like the challenge of proving that everything can be funny. You just have to picture it."

Speaking about his return to India, he reminisces about the last time when he was greeted with boxes of home-made *biryani* from loving fans. "This time I am going to trust Ravina. Unfortunately, I am a white boy and I have a white boy stomach so we're going to be sensible, but on the last day we are going to destroy my stomach," he says and laughs about being a very happy person if he could eat *vada-pav* the entire time!

Daniel Sloss will be on tour in India from March 15 to 24. Tickets on insider.in starting ₹999.

Winning collaboration

Vivek MV

Kannada director Guruprasad turned heads with his debut *Mata* (2006), a sharp satire that questioned the sanctity of mutts, revered as sacred institutions across the country, and slammed the dwindling credibility of pontiffs. He then followed it up with *Eddelu Manjunatha* (2009), a terrific black comedy on the life of a lazy and unemployed man.

Both *Mata* and *Eddelu Manjunatha* had Jaggesh in the lead role. For his third film, Guruprasad took a break from Jaggesh and cast Rangayana Raghu as one of the protagonists in *Director's Special,* a dark film on human greed. The film opened to mixed responses and denied Guruprasad a hat-trick of hits.

"I will clinch a hat-trick with *Ranganayaka,*" says the filmmaker on his third collaboration with Jaggesh. The film hit the screens on March 8, clashing with Yogaraj Bhat's *Karataka Damanaka,* starring Shivarajkumar and Prabhudeva.

"After my first two films, there was a lot of talk about my potential hat-trick. I could have made a run-of-the-mill commercial film and minted money. People had huge expectations from Jaggesh and me, and it would have been tough to impress them again so soon. So I made a film that made them think. That's what Malayalam films do; they entertain yet make you think," explains Guruprasad.

In sync Director Guruprasad and actor Jaggesh on the sets. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ranganayaka is touted to be a satire on the Kannada film industry. "It is going to be a laugh riot," says the director.

"People will surely demand yet another film with Jaggesh," he says, without forgetting to heap praise on his long-time friend and collaborator.

"Jaggesh is a gifted actor. In *Eddelu Manjunatha,* he took three days to get into the character. After that, we finished the movie in just 17 days. The industry still hasn't explored Jaggesh's range; when you box him in a stereotypical comical character, it shows your limitations."

While they keep you hooked, Guruprasad's films suffer from abrupt endings. The director, however, defends his style of finishing a movie. "Even after I entertain you for two hours, if you still feel the film should have lasted longer... then the film has impressed you. My policy is that a film has to be worth your ticket price, and shouldn't overstay its welcome. In fact, Fazil, the popular Malayalam director (*Manichitrathazhu* fame), writes his climax first in the script... I follow the same pattern," he says.

Guruprasad's excellent hold on Kannada leads to inventive word play, and his dark humour makes his movies stand out. "Language is the biggest gift we have got from this world. Humour is born through language. In my formative years, I would test my humour with my family. My parents, siblings, and relatives would always laugh at my jokes. I always felt confident that I can make people laugh," he says.

The director often gets criticised for delaying his projects. There have been several reports of his strained relationship with his producers.

"I see a producer-director relationship as a marriage. A film is their child. If they get along well, people will speak highly of their product. I have had my share of bitter experiences with producers. But today, I am in a position to fund my movies."

What about claims that he is an egotistic creator? "Ego is often misunderstood. If I love my art form, I will ensure I strive hard to do full justice to it. For instance, during the shoot of *Eddelu Manjunatha,* I kept repeating a scene. Jaggesh felt I was becoming egotistic and told me he would not give me more than three takes per scene. I told him I wasn't being unnecessarily persistent, and that I was thinking from the audience's perspective. When I don't laugh at a scene while shooting, people won't laugh in the theatres, right? You can't take the art form for granted."

Celebrating Holi with twelve classical notes

Shilpa Anandraj

Ekatvam, an initiative of the charitable trust, Entrust Foundation, presents its annual festival, Ekatvam Holi Music Fest-2024. The four-day event will feature seven concerts and two award ceremonies and will be held in Bengaluru from March 22 to March 25.

"Ekatvam means oneness and the foundation provides a platform to young musicians to help them perform across the country," says Rajmohan Krishnan the founder of Ekatvam speaking from his office on Magrath Road.

"We also give awards in the names of veteran musicians. We have the TN Krishnan Memorial Award, which is given every year in Chennai. This year, in Bengaluru, we have initiated two awards in the names of Mysore Vasudevachar, and Gangubai Hangal."

The music festival is held on Holi ever year since 2019, says Krishnan. "The festival is about celebrating colours through Indian music. I also believe we are the only organisation in India who equally propagate Hindustani and Carnatic music."

The festival will bring together performers, connoisseurs, critics and mentors in the genres of Carnatic vocal, Carnatic duet , Carnatic fusion and Hindustani vocal, says Rajmohan.

Colours of music Artiste Venkatesh Kumar and founder Rajmohan Krishnan (below). SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"It is our aim to preserve, promote and celebrate Indian classical music and our cultural heritage. We are a country that is deeply rooted in tradition, yet fuelled by innovation. We provide a platform for budding artistes while supporting and showcasing innovative works by senior artistes across different genres."

Ekatvam's line-up this year is Archana and Samanvi, Mysore Manjunath, Swarathmika Srikanth, Spoorthi Rao, Venkatesh Kumar and Gurudutt Krishnamurthy with their accompanying artistes.

The concerts are free for all, says Rajmohan. "We have elderly people coming to the festival who are not tech savvy. We do not want it to be cumbersome for them to enjoy music. Music and elder care is something we focus on. I come from a family that was deeply involved in classical music. We lost our mother in 1991 and my father, PV Krishnan (who passed away in 2015) was a connoisseur of Carnatic music. He lived a lonely life as a widower."

Elderly people, Rajmohan says, enjoy music. "They have the time to understand and critique it too. Music is what moves the heart. Good music is like a breath of fresh air and that is why we started the Holi Music Fest."

Gayana Samaja has always been the venue for the festival, says Rajmohan. "We want to include Indian classical dance forms too to our festival next year. So that people can enjoy the wide range of genres."

The concerts at Gayana Samaja that begin daily at 4pm are free and open to all. For details of the daily programme, visit www.ekatvamtrust.com or call 9739744747

Tamilisai resigns as Governor and L-G, to contest Lok Sabha election

According to sources, the BJP is exploring the option of fielding her from Chennai South constituency; the senior leader's return to active politics and likely candidature in the poll is seen as the party's attempt to field a known face in Tamil Nadu

N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

Tamilisai Soundararajan, Governor of Telangana and Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry, on Monday resigned from her posts to contest the Lok Sabha election as a BJP candidate from Tamil Nadu.

She resigned after giving a send-off to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had stayed at the Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, she said: "I resigned from the posts of Governor of Telangana and Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry and submitted a letter to President Droupadi Murmu. I have decided to return to active politics and will contest in the Lok Sabha polls."

> I will not contest from Puducherry. I will contest from one of the constituencies in T.N., which will be decided by the BJP's high command
>
> **TAMILISAI SOUNDARARAJAN**
> BJP leader

She rejected talk of her contesting from Puducherry. "I will not contest from Puducherry. I will contest from one of the constituencies in Tamil Nadu, which will be decided by the BJP's high command," she added. The party is exploring the option of fielding her from Chennai South seat as well, sources said.

Before her appointment as Governor of Telangana in September 2019, Ms. Soundararajan was the president of the Tamil Nadu unit of BJP for over five years. She unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election in Thoothukudi against DMK deputy general secretary Kanimozhi Karunanidhi. She was also given additional charge as Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry in February 2021.

The leader has joined a list of leaders who vacated the post of Governor to come back to politics.

Even during her tenure as the Governor, Ms. Soundararajan continued to voice out criticism on political developments in Tamil Nadu. Her return to active politics and her likely candidature in the Lok Sabha poll is seen as an attempt by the BJP to field a known face in the State.

T.N. moves SC against Ravi for stalling Ponmudy's re-induction

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu on Monday moved the Supreme Court, accusing Governor R.N. Ravi of "attempting to run a parallel government" in the State by refusing to adhere to the Cabinet's advice to appoint DMK leader K. Ponmudy as Higher Education Minister.

The Cabinet's advice follows the recent apex court order suspending his conviction in a disproportionate assets case.

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud agreed to list the case following an urgent oral mentioning made by the State.

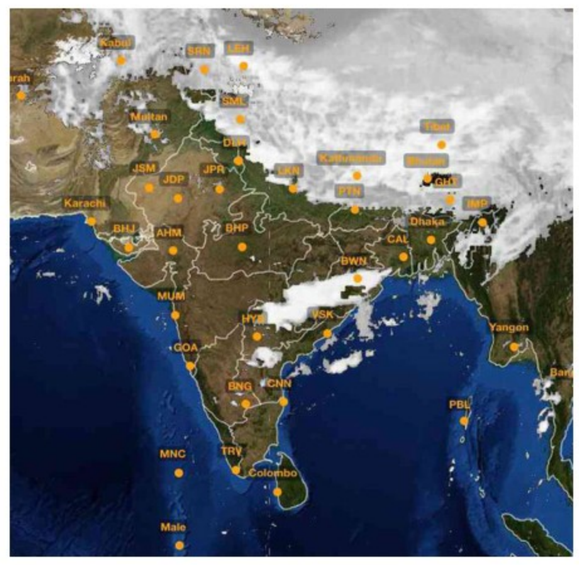
The State argued that the Governor had no individual discretion in the appointment of a State Minister and the suitability of the candidate, and had to follow the advice of the Chief Minister-led State Cabinet under Article 164(1) of the Constitution.

"It is now well settled that a Governor cannot decide who should be a Minister on moral grounds or any other grounds. That sole prerogative is with the Chief Minister," the State said.

It pressed that Mr. Ravi was in clear contempt of the court's March 11 order, which had suspended the conviction of Mr. Ponmudy specifically for the reason that he should not suffer disqualification under the Representation of People (RP) Act from holding office of Minister or MLA.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Thunderstorm with lightning/hail/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Telangana and coastal Andhra Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	32.8	20.8	Kozhikode	—	36.6	27.0
Ahmedabad	—	36.6	21.8	Kurnool	—	39.8	26.4
Aizawl	—	31.8	15.4	Lucknow	—	31.2	14.4
Allahabad	—	33.8	16.0	Madurai	—	37.2	24.3
Bengaluru	—	34.1	22.2	Mangaluru	—	33.2	24.5
Bhopal	—	32.9	20.2	Mumbai	—	32.0	22.6
Bhubaneswar	—	34.8	25.6	Mysuru	—	35.0	22.0
Chandigarh	—	30.1	14.7	New Delhi	—	30.6	12.2
Chennai	—	33.2	25.5	Patna	—	32.6	19.6
Coimbatore	—	36.0	23.4	Port Blair	—	31.2	23.8
Dehradun	—	29.6	12.8	Puducherry	—	33.6	24.6
Gangtok	—	19.6	11.3	Pune	—	36.0	19.3
Goa	—	33.2	22.4	Raipur	—	34.9	23.2
Guwahati	—	34.4	16.0	Ranchi	—	32.6	18.7
Hubballi	—	38.0	22.0	Shillong	—	22.6	10.8
Hyderabad	—	34.6	24.3	Shimla	—	21.8	11.0
Imphal	—	30.7	10.7	Srinagar	—	20.5	3.5
Jaipur	—	31.4	16.1	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.0	25.8
Kochi	—	32.8	27.4	Tiruchi	—	36.3	23.0
Kohima	—	24.0	10.9	Vijayawada	—	35.4	23.2
Kolkata	—	30.9	23.4	Visakhapatnam	—	32.6	25.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.20	..49	.27	...124	...125	
Bengaluru	.14	..17	.38	...299	...166	
Chennai	...2	6	.97	73	72	
Delhi	.30	..76	.53	...250	...252	
Hyderabad	...2	..28	.40	44	...113	
Kolkata	.16	..56	.32	79	...101	
Lucknow	.32	..12	.29	...162	...150	
Mumbai	...6	..73	.31	...106	...112	
Pune	.84	106	114	56	61	
Visakhapatnam	.12	..37	.27	47	82	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 323 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Tumakuru, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 28

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Delhi excise policy: Kavitha to challenge her arrest in SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Bharat Rashtra Samithi MLC, K. Kavitha, has moved the Supreme Court against her arrest and remand by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) in connection with the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy case. She is the daughter of former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

The petition by the Telangana legislator contended that her arrest was arbitrary and violative of the postulates of Section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

K. Kavitha

Ms. Kavitha was remanded to ED custody on Saturday till March 23. She alleged that her arrest and remand were done in a "patently routine and mechanical manner".

An earlier petition that she filed in this connection is still pending in the Supreme Court. The court in September last year had agreed to examine Ms. Kavitha's arguments highlighting restrictions placed on police officers under Section 160 of the Code of Criminal Procedure against summoning women or questioning them at any place other than their own homes.

Ms. Kavitha maintained that there was no case against her and she had been implicated in the case on the basis of statements extracted using coercion.

MLC conspired with AAP leaders, says ED

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The ED on Monday alleged that BRS MLC K. Kavitha had conspired with Aam Aadmi Party leaders for getting favours in the implementation of the erstwhile Delhi excise policy.

The ED alleged that during the search proceedings at her residence, her relatives and associates had caused obstruction.

Alleging that Ms. Kavitha along with others had conspired with the senior AAP leaders, including Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, the ED said: "In exchange for these favours, she was involved in paying ₹100 crore to the leaders of AAP. By the acts of corruption and conspiracy in the formulation of Delhi Excise Policy, a continuous stream of illegal funds in the form of kickback, from the wholesalers was generated for the AAP."

The ED also alleged that Ms. Kavitha and her associates were to recover the "proceeds of crime paid in advance to AAP and to further generate profits/ proceeds of crime from this entire conspiracy".

DMK, Congress seal seat allocation deal for LS poll

Udhav Naig
CHENNAI

The Congress will contest in the Tiruvallur (SC), Krishnagiri, Mayiladuthurai, Cuddalore, Karur, Sivaganga, Virudhunagar, Tirunelveli, Kanniyakumari and Puducherry Lok Sabha constituencies as part of the INDIA bloc led by the DMK.

An agreement to this effect was signed between Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin and Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) president K. Selvaperunthagai at the DMK headquarters in Chennai on Monday.

The Congress was allocated nine constituencies in Tamil Nadu and the lone constituency in Puducherry. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, too, the Congress contested in nine plus one seats, and won in all but the Theni constituency, where former TNCC president E.V.K.S. Elangovan lost to AIADMK candidate P. Ravindranath, son of expelled AIADMK coordinator and former Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam.

Battle-ready: TNCC president K. Selvaperunthagai showing the list of constituencies from where the Congress will contest the election this year. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

As reported in *The Hindu* last week, the DMK has replaced three constituencies that were allotted to the Congress in 2019 – Arani, Theni and Tiruchi – with Cuddalore, Tirunelveli and Mayiladuthurai. The Congress was defeated in Theni in 2019.

With DMK office-bearers in Arani reportedly unhappy over sitting Congress MP M.K. Vishnu Prasad and his family members being given preference in the region for several years now, there had been a demand to field a DMK candidate this time around.

In the Congress, too, there had been voices in favour of fielding fresh faces this time instead of veterans and family members of influential leaders.

While the DMK is entering the fray in Theni, the party has allotted the Tiruchi seat to the MDMK.

Former TNCC president K.S. Alagiri is likely to be fielded in Cuddalore and All India Professionals' Congress chairman Praveen Chakravarthy is among the front-runners in Mayiladuthurai.

Multi-purpose app SAKHI to assist Gaganyaan crew

Tiki Rajwi
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) facility at Thumba in Thiruvananthapuram, has developed a multi-purpose app that will help astronauts on the Gaganyaan space flight mission carry out a range of tasks such as looking up vital technical information or communicating with one another.

The Space-borne Assistant and Knowledge Hub for Crew Interaction (SAKHI) will, among other things, monitor the health of the astronauts, help them stay connected with Earth and even alert them about their dietary schedules. The space facility has successfully tested an engineering model of the custom-built, hand-held smart device featuring SAKHI. The development of a flight model is in progress.

The VSSC describes the application as an indispensable assistant to the crew. "During the mission, for instance, the astronauts may need to look up technical documents and training manuals at short notice. Given the limited space in the crew module, taking along thick tomes will be out of the question. SAKHI will ensure that they have all the required data at their fingertips," VSSC director S. Unnikrishnan Nair told *The Hindu*.

SAKHI was developed by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Strapped to space suits, the platform can be quickly accessed at all times.

The ISRO is hoping to launch the Gaganyaan mission in 2025. The identities of the four astronaut-designates, all IAF test pilots, were revealed at an event attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 27.

Karuvannur scam: HC pulls up ED for delay in probe

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Monday reiterated its displeasure over the delay in the investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) into the alleged fraudulent deals in the Karuvannur Service Cooperative Bank.

Considering a petition filed by Ali Sabri challenging the attachment of his properties and freezing of his bank accounts by ED, Justice Devan Ramachandran orally observed that the ED cannot continue the investigation forever.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, S.Sowndirarajan S/o, A.p. Sowdayan R/o No, b1-103, ground Floor, 208, Sfs, Housing Board Colony, Yelahanka Newtown Bangalore- 64 have changed my name to A.S.Soundrarajan for all purposes.

I, SAFWAN Poothayil Asif, S/o Asif Poothayil Makkar, R/O: G7, DSR Cresent, sarjapura Outer Ring Rd, Bellandur, Blr–103 have Changed My Name as Safwan Asif Vide Afdvt Dtd: 14/03/2024

I, LOKESH Kenchappa S/o Kenchappa, #1241/2, 4th Crs, 9th Mn, Kamalanehru Extn, Yeshwanthapura, Bluru-22 have changed my name to Lokesha Kenchappa vide affidavit dt 16.03.24 before Notary S.Vijayakumar, Bluru.

I, NAMRATHA Charanya, D/o Lokesha.K, #1241/2, 4th Crs, 9th Mn, Kamalanehru Extn, Yeshwanthapura, Bluru-22 have changed my name to Namratha Charanya Lokesha vide affidavit dt 16.03.24 before Notary S.Vijayakumar, Bluru.

I, SUFYAN Poothayil Asif, S/o Asif Poothayil Makkar, R/O: G7,DSR Cresent, sarjapura Outer Ring Rd, Bellandur, Blr–103 have Changed My Name as Sufyan Asif Vide Afdvt Dtd:14/03/2024

I, Ahamed Khursheed Tanveer S/O, Khursheed Ahmed R/o # 16 Patel Nanjundappa Road Kammanahalli Main Road Cross Ramaswamy Palya Bangalore-560033 have changed my name to Khursheed Tanveer Ahamed.

I, Krish Ponanna S/o. Udayakumar G K R/o. #655, 14th Cross, 1st Main, BM Srinagar, Mysuru, Karnataka - 570016, have Changed my Name to Krrish Ponnanna.G.U Vide Affidavit Dt: 14/02/2024 Sworn before Notary K.B.Nagesha, Mysore.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHASHIKALA Jainar, R/a No:1-9-164/1, Akila Enclave Appt, Azad Nagar, Raichur-584101 have changed my name to Shashikala vide affidavit dt: 16.03.2024 sworn before Notary Smt.A.Manjula, B'luru

I, MADLAKKAPALLI YASODHA D/o YARRISWAMY, R/O Hanumanthanalli, Challakere, Chitradurga, Karnataka, 577529, Have changed my name to YASHODHAMMA.

I, NAGRAJ SM S/o K NAGARAJ, R/O H.NO.5/1, Ravikumar Building, Maragodanahalli, jigani, Karnataka–560105, Have changed my name to K ERANNA.

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Contact: 9945238106/ 9353969886

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client is in the process of transacting in respect of the properties more fully and particularly described in the Schedule hereunder ("**Schedule Properties**") with M/s CMES Jupiter Private Limited, who are the absolute owners thereof.

All persons having or claiming any right, title, benefit, claim, charge, interest or encumbrance whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Properties or any part thereof, by way of possession, sale, exchange, assignment, lease, sub-lease, license, tenancy claim, mortgage, charge, lien, occupation, trust, easement or otherwise howsoever, shall notify their claim or objection if any, in writing, together with documentary proof thereof to the undersigned, within 10 (ten) days from the date of publication hereof. If no claims or objections are received within the above-mentioned period, then it shall be conclusively presumed and deemed that no other person has any right, title, interest, claim, charge, or encumbrance whatsoever with respect to the Schedule Properties and further our client will be entitled to proceed with its transaction with respect to the Schedule Properties.

SCHEDULE PROPERTIES

All that piece and parcel of lands more fully described in the Table below, all situated at Maruthinagar Village, Kasaba Hobli, Jagalur Taluk, Davanagere

Sl. No.	Survey No.	Extent	Boundaries			
			East	West	North	South
1.	26/1 (Old Survey No. 39/1)	4 acres 20 guntas (no kharab land)	Survey No. 28 in Yarehalli	Survey No. 27/2	Survey No. 25	Survey No. 26/3
2.	26/4 (Old Survey No. 39/4)	4 acres 26 guntas (no kharab land)	Survey No. 28 in Yarehalli	Survey No. 27/2	Survey No. 26/3	Survey No. 26/5
3.	Survey No. 26/3 (Old Survey No. 39/3)	4 acres 23 guntas (no kharab land)	Survey No. 28 in Yarehalli	Survey No. 27/2	Survey No. 26/1	Survey No. 26/4
4.	Survey No. 26/5 (Old Survey No. 39/3)	4 acres 223 guntas (no kharab land)	Survey No. 28 in Yarehalli	Survey No. 27/2	Survey No. 26/4	Survey No. 26/2
5.	Survey No. 27/2 (Old Survey No. 59/2)	8 acres 2 guntas (no kharab land)	Property belonging to B.T. Suma	Survey No. 60	Survey No. 38	Survey No. 59/1

Date : 19/03/2024
Place: Bengaluru

Veena Krishnan
Partner
Samvad Partners
62/1 Palace Road, Vasanthnagar,Bengaluru - 560 001
Tel: +91 (80) 4268 6000

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby notified that my client negotiating to purchase all that property described in the Schedule herein from MR. M. VISHNU VARDHAN S/o. Mr. M. Rangachari Residing at; No. 10/11, Vivekananda Colony, Kanakapura Road, J.P. Nagar, Bengaluru-560078 who claims to be the owner of the Schedule Property.Any person or persons ascertaining any right, title, interest or claim in the Schedule Property or any part thereof and in any manner whatsoever against the Schedule Property based on the documents pertaining to the Schedule Property or objecting for the proposed Sale may lodge their objections and/or claims with the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence within 7 (Seven) days from the date of this publication and objections and/or claims received thereafter will not be binding on my clients and my clients will proceed to purchase the below mentioned property as if there are no objections/claims of whatsoever nature with regard to the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY:

ITEM NO.I
ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of the Northern Portion of the Site bearing No.5, carved out of the property bearing Sy. No.13, situated at Yelenahalli Village, Begur Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District, presently bearing Khatha No.709/220/5 in the record of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), the site is measured and bounded as follows:
MEASUREMENTS:
East to West : 65 Feet;
North to South : (50+44)/2 Feet.
Totally measuring: 3055 Square Feet and
BOUNDARIES:
East by : Site No.4;
West by : Road;
North by : Road;
South by : Sothern Portion of the Site No.5.

ITEM NO.II
ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of the Sothern Portion of the Site bearing No.5, carved out of the property bearing Sy. No.13, situated at Yelenahalli Village, Begur Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District, presently bearing Khatha No.698/220/5 in the record of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), the site is measured and bounded as follows:
MEASUREMENTS:
East to West : 65 Feet;
North to South : 50 Feet.
Totally measuring: 3250 Square Feet and
BOUNDARIES:
East by : Site No.4;
West by : Road;
North by : Northern Portion of the Site No.5;
South by : Site No.10.

ROOPA SHETTY, Advocate
Lex Situs, No.810, 'BILWAPRIYA PLATINA', 2nd Floor,
27th Main Road, HSR Layout, Sector 1, Bangalore - 560102.
Phone: +91 9902026199 and 8088731020 ; Email:info@lexsitus.com

Trade puzzle

The uptick in goods exports is heartening, but difficult to sustain

Towards the end of a tumultuous trading year, India's goods exports jumped 11.9% in February, marking the healthiest uptick in 20 months. The $41.4 billion tally is the highest in 11 months, and only the third occasion in two years that the $40 billion mark has been breached. It is remarkable that this spurt, significantly higher than the average export tally of $35.4 billion in the first ten months of this year, comes amid persistent concerns about disruptions in the Red Sea and the drought-hit Panama Canal that have throttled vital trading routes and spiked the time and cost of moving consignments. While the last two months' trade numbers suggest that India is yet to feel the full impact of the logistics challenges for servicing key markets in Europe and the Americas, it may be too simplistic a conclusion. It is plausible that some of February's numbers may reflect shipments that were probably despatched earlier and reached their destinations only last month using longer routes. Economists believe a combination of backlogged orders attaining fruition and demand improvements may be at work. However, with interest rates still high, global demand conditions are yet to demonstrate the rebound the World Trade Organization (WTO) had hoped for in 2024.

The WTO expects global trade to rise 3.3% this year after a 0.8% crawl in 2023. But by its own reckoning, using a gauge called the Goods Trade Barometer, things are yet to perk up. As of March 8, the barometer, where a reading of over 100 reflects above-trend exim volumes, had a reading of just 100.6. The export orders parameter was marginally higher at 101.7 but container shipping slipped to 98.6. Some modest gains in the first quarter of 2024 may be seen owing to the base effects of a weak 2023, but any such gains could be easily derailed by regional conflicts and geopolitical tensions, the WTO has warned. Policymakers may have turned upbeat about surpassing last year's record overall exports (merchandise and services combined), but must not lose sight of the lingering risks and challenges, including the impact of freight hikes on margins. While electronics goods exports have been an outlier in 2023-24's weak exports narrative (-3.5% so far), the WTO's latest barometer reading for electronic components trade has plummeted to 95.6. This is visible in February's numbers as both electronics imports and exports grew just fractionally over 1%. For now, the trade deficit should not be a concern, despite imports jumping at a 17-month high pace last month, led by a spike in inflows of increasingly pricey gold. Finding better ways to support exporters, especially in adversely hit employment-intensive sectors such as textiles, and gems and jewellery, remains critical.

Hollow victory

The manner of Putin's win exposes the underlying weakness of the regime

The result of Russia's March 15-17 elections was known to everyone even before the first ballot was cast. The only question that needed to be answered was what the winning margin of President Vladimir Putin, who has been at the helm for nearly a quarter century, would be. On Monday, Russia's Central Election Commission (CEC) said Mr. Putin had won nearly 88% of the vote, while nearest rival Nikolay Kharitonov of the Communist Party, got 4.31%. The country saw a record turnout of 77.44% and the results showed that Russia "is united" under the long-time leader, according to Ella Pamfilova, the CEC chief. In all practical sense, it was a carefully managed election that would have only one possible outcome. Only Kremlin-tolerated candidates were allowed to stand contest. Those critical of Mr. Putin's policies were barred on technical grounds. The state had also passed legislation in the election run-up criminalising any criticism of the Ukraine war. For Mr. Putin, who faces international criticism over the war, the election was an opportunity to tell the world that the country was united behind his leadership.

Over the years, Mr. Putin, 71, has mastered a complex model of a tightly-held state with regular elections and little dissent. To his credit, he remains a popular leader. For many Russians, he rebuilt the state in the early 2000s after the "decade of humiliation" of the 1990s that followed the collapse of the USSR. Statism, rooted in Orthodox Christian conservative values, replaced the state-sanctioned communism of the Soviet years. He stood up to the West, seeking to restore Russia's great power glory. He brought wars within Russian territories to an end, ensured economic and political stability and expanded the country's borders with the annexation of Crimea in 2014. But he also turned the state into a militaristic, authoritarian machinery that sought complete dominance at home and counterbalancing against the West abroad. Two of his most vocal political opponents are gone – Boris Nemtsov and Alexei Navalny – while several others are in jail. The media have been muzzled. And state institutions have practically become branches of the Kremlin. With his sweeping victory, Mr. Putin will likely project further strength and preserve the status quo. But the meticulous way in which the regime staged the election, with the goal of bolstering Mr. Putin's numbers, and its overzealous attempt to stamp out even the slightest dissent expose the underlying weakness rather than endorsing the strongman image that hangs on the facade of the regime Mr. Putin has built.

Violence, homelessness, and women's mental health

Vandana Gopikumar

co-founder of The Banyan (a mental health service organisation) and The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health, is a critical social work practitioner and researcher

Lakshmi Narasimhan

with an independent research practice at TSI Consulting LLP, has been working with The Banyan and The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health since 2005

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) presents a sobering picture of the pervasive violence against women in India. Almost 30% of women between the ages of 18-49 years have experienced physical violence beginning at age 15; 6% reported sexual violence. Evidence indicates that violence and mental health conditions have a reciprocal, cause-and-effect relationship, and both factors significantly heighten the risk of homelessness. In the three decades of working with homeless women with mental health conditions at The Banyan, we have witnessed this recursive interaction between violence against women, homelessness, and mental health almost universally.

Findings of relevance

A survey of 346 women accessing outpatient services at The Banyan found that relational disruptions, often in the background of violence, predicted homelessness, even when women had accessed care for their mental health – a finding that is mirrored in other studies globally. Another qualitative research that examined user accounts of trauma drawn from women with histories of homelessness showed that descriptions of experiences relating to violence in social relationships, experience of alienation and shame, and poverty did not entirely match with the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* conceptualisations of trauma.

Qualitative interviews with several women living with mental health conditions detail their journeys into homelessness, not merely as a deficit in access to care but also as an escape and possible liberation from repeated cycles of unremitting violence – whether it was from a predatory father, a husband who controlled all aspects of life or an aunt who issued threats to sell into slavery to pay for meals. A recurrent theme that emerged was the impact of child sexual abuse and intimate partner violence on individual mental health and homelessness.

At age 5, Leela began understanding what it meant to be a (child of a) homeless woman living with mental illness. Her mother, Jaya, fled an abusive family home with only Leela, leaving her older siblings behind. Desperate and hearing voices, Jaya contemplated ending their suffering by jumping from a train but was dissuaded by Leela, who did not fully understand her mother's motives but was consumed by an ominous feeling of desperation and crippling fear. Throughout their homelessness, the duo faced the arduous task of survival, finding food and safe spaces to rest every day. Jaya's deformed hand is a reminder of the violence they experienced on the streets.

Within a multifactorial matrix of structural barriers such as poverty and caste, violence and associated feelings of loss of agency feature prominently amongst reasons that precipitate an exit from typical relational bonds and conventional notions of home assumed to provide safety, a sense of community, and belongingness. Ellen Corrin's work offers a nuanced perspective on the phenomenon of social withdrawal in the context of schizophrenia that challenges reductionist views around the construction of negative symptoms. Instead of an overt focus on alignment with the social environment, her work shifts the emphasis to considering meanings and personal experiences behind behaviours often labelled as symptoms of the disorder, and situating mental illness and related symptoms within 'a life frame'. The same lens can be used to approach intersecting issues of women's mental health, homelessness, and violence.

> Many of the manifestations of mental ill-health appear to be embedded in the reality of adverse life events

An umbrella-like label

Historically, the label of madness has been used to discredit, subjugate, and silence women who are seen as demonstrating undesirable traits – intellectual curiosity, assertiveness, and autonomy. From the witch trials in the Middle Ages to the incarceration of women in asylums, resistance to oppression and refusal to comply with expected norms were labelled as missteps due to a deranged imagination. In contemporary patriarchal society, the social construct of womanhood continues to be carefully curated and enforced, confining women and their value within reproductive roles and docile submission to various forms of violence, routinely normalised and justified. Madness in this context then becomes not an individuated pathology but a response to the continued violence against women.

Some women describe their madness as resistance, as a defiant embrace of what is taboo for women, an opportunity to break free from coerced identities and assume new personas that transcend patriarchal norms. Others describe their madness as a solace in beliefs such as being the mother of 100 male children or transforming into a goddess with special powers by performing a complex ritual. In the process, some lay claim to an elevated sense of purpose and accruing cultural capital that society places significant value on and associates with improved status. While others may find escape in an idea or imagination to battle the shame, fear and devaluation. And, yet, some other women experience their madness as a journey inward, where voice hearing and altered perceptions become portals to alternate realities where they can engage in a spiritual interrogation of who they are without social constraints.

In contrast to these multifaceted descriptions of madness in the context of violence, the mainstream discourse on women's mental health is dominated by a narrow focus on higher prevalence rates of depression, anxiety or eating disorders, or mental health needs associated with the prescribed reproductive role such as postpartum depression. All these deserve attention but not in a manner that isolates these experiences from the larger narrative. Women's experiences of distress are often viewed through a reductionist biomedicine-dominated lens, neglecting the insidious impact of violence that women endure and absolving society of its complicity. Navigating mental health and social care systems that mirror these biases, in the background of poverty and caste-based marginalisation, takes a profound toll, elevating risks of homelessness. In our experience, women often encounter health systems that dismiss their lived experience, focusing largely on symptoms and diagnoses that are to be treated and eliminated. In contrast, our experience suggests that many of the manifestations of mental ill-health are embedded in the reality of adverse life events. In this context, investments cannot be confined to increasing proximal access to mental health care without collective action that can substantively address deep-rooted violence.

There is an urgent need, therefore, to develop comprehensive solutions based on a systematic unpacking of multiple factors and their interactions that perpetrate violence against women. Recognising and compensating women for their unpaid labour in household roles and creating the space for women to find supportive networks and alternate family structures outside of typical heteronormative relationships may offer security and refuge. Ensuring access to basic income, housing, and land ownership may offer economic independence and reduce vulnerability to homelessness. Embedding in the education environment, a curriculum that helps growing adolescents interrogate and challenge harmful gendered norms may help foster a generation that values egalitarian norms and rejects all forms of violence against women.

Biological scientist Robert Sapolsky contends that our inclinations, actions, and choices are not products of an autonomous, conscious process of free will but rather shaped by biological factors such as our genes, neural circuitry, and brain chemistry. His work emphasises the role of childhood adversity – abuse, neglect, and poverty – and the profound effects these have on the developing brain, underscoring the need for policies and interventions that reduce violence beginning in the formative years.

Adopt a multifacted approach

While the two-way relationship between homelessness and mental illness is recognised globally, we need to scrutinise the nuances more closely. Violence against women is one factor that may not receive enough attention in this context. Instead of addressing root causes rhetorically, we should examine the complex strands surrounding mental health. This journey requires opening up to new avenues, involving diverse professionals, innovative research, and meaningful involvement of those with lived experiences. Prioritising a range of robust responses can better address the plurality of needs, especially for high-priority groups such as homeless women. No single narrative makes for a complete response. Greater exploration of phenomena and their influence on mental health, the role of intersectionality, power asymmetries, and the use of feminist standpoint theory in advancing science and ways of knowing are needed. The absence of such a multifaceted approach represents the greatest lacuna.

The MIRV leap that fires up India's nuclear deterrence

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The Agni-5 ballistic missile test dubbed the "Divyastra", that was conducted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), is strategically consequential. With a range of over 5,000 kilometres, the Agni-5 is the longest-range missile India has tested so far. But it is not simply its range but, equally, its potency which represents a watershed moment for India's nuclear deterrent. The potency of India's nuclear deterrent is enhanced because this variant is integrated with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs).

A comparison with China

Though MIRV technology is not new, it is to India. The five designated nuclear weapons states – the United States, Russia, the People's Republic of China, France and the United Kingdom – already possess MIRV capable projectiles which are integrated into their respective nuclear arsenals. India has joined a very select group of countries to develop an MIRV ballistic missile.

MIRV-tipped missiles are a necessity simply because they strike multiple targets simultaneously and help evade ballistic missiles defences. China is building ballistic missile defences such as the Hongqi (HQ-19) ground-based ballistic missile interceptors, which have been tested, but their capacity to intercept Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMS) such as the Agni-5 is still suspect. It is, nevertheless, progressing steadily. The HQ-19s would eventually have the range to intercept the earlier variants of the Agni IRBM, especially when configured to carry only a single warhead. Ballistic missile defences paired to a growing Chinese nuclear arsenal would have significantly eroded India's nuclear striking power as it would bequeath to China a strong damage limitation capability, especially if the Chinese were to carry out a nuclear first strike against India. Now that India has integrated the Agni-5 with multiple warheads, greater balance has been restored in the Sino-Indian nuclear deterrent relationship. To be sure, more testing of the MIRV-capable Agni-5 will be required to render the Indian nuclear ballistic missile arsenal more credible as the end-user - the Indian armed services are unlikely to be satisfied with a single test.

> As a China-specific missile, the successful test of the Agni-5 MIRV missile enables India to reach a milestone

Demanding requirements

Building MIRV-capable ballistic missiles is not easy. This is because it requires meeting some very demanding technical criteria, such as nuclear warhead miniaturisation, ensuring that the receptacle that carries the warhead or re-entry vehicle is of low weight or mass before its release from the Post Boost Vehicle (PBV), and also having the re-entry vehicles configured precisely to fit into the missile as well their separation from the PBV, which has to be manoeuvrable. Guidance and accuracy are a necessity as re-entry vehicles have to be spin stabilised during atmospheric re-entry. A MIRV-based missile can only strike multiple targets that are within its ambit or geographic footprint. With the recent Agni-5 test, India has met these demanding technical requirements. In India's case, this MIRV development is all the more significant and impressive because it has come against considerable odds stacked against the country's missile and nuclear engineers.

First, inadequate nuclear testing by New Delhi compromised the extent to which it could miniaturise warheads and MIRV them to strike multiple targets. Second, the lack of sufficient testing also undermined the extent to which the re-entry vehicles could be designed to carry the warheads. The DRDO and all its key associate agencies such as the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL) responsible for integrating warheads with missiles and the Advanced Systems Limited (ASL) as this test of the Agni-5 visibly demonstrated, have overcome these challenges. The opacity surrounding this MIRV missile is about the number of warheads it can carry, which in all likelihood would remain classified. Going by speculation, it is improbable that it can carry more than three warheads. Further, the yield of the nuclear warheads is likely to be limited due to the small number of atomic tests India has conducted. In addition, it is unclear whether the Agni-5 can carry decoys and chaff, especially during the boost and intermediate phase of the missile's flight. Agni-5 will in all probability be launched from a road mobile platform.

Other projects ahead

Chinese missile defence interceptors will likely subject the Agni-5 to mid-course interception. Nevertheless, the Atomic Energy Commission of India, especially the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), which is directly responsible for core Research and Development (R&D) with respect to nuclear devices, have done a good job in designing sufficiently compact nuclear warheads for MIRV capability. This is a China-specific missile. There could be more to come from the DRDO and AEC with India adding more punch to its nuclear arsenal when it tests a long-range Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM), which India's nuclear ballistic missile submarines can launch. The Agni-5 with MIRV capability bolsters India's nuclear capabilities *vis-à-vis* China. It puts China on notice – that India is preparing itself to counter the advances Beijing has made with its missile and missile defence programmes. With the successful test of the Agni-5 MIRV missile, India has crossed a key benchmark in its march to become a highly credible nuclear and missile power.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wayanad contest, options

I write this as Secretary and Correspondent, The Quaide Milleth College for Men, Chennai, as an open letter to Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader. It is disappointing to learn that you have chosen, again, to contest from the Wayanad constituency in Kerala in the general election, against Ms. Annie Raja, leader of the CPI and the General Secretary of the All India Democratic Women's Association. The LDF and the UDF are the two main alliances to contest against each other in Kerala though they are both the pillars of the INDIA bloc. The Left parties are always in the forefront when it is about fighting fascist forces such as the BJP and establishing a just government based on the high principles of democracy and the rule of law. As a lead party leader of the Congress, you have various options before you to get elected safely.

Though it is essential that you are successfully elected to lead the government, it is also very important that there is the presence of very strong Left Members in Parliament to safely run the government. As the grandson of Quaide Milleth Mohamed Isamil Sahib, founder president of the IUML, I am associated with the electorate in the Malabar area in Kerala for over five decades. I can say with some knowledge of the electorate, that there could be a swing in favour of the CPI leader.

I request you to contest from one of the many safe constituencies in Tamil Nadu, where we will ensure a thumping majority for you.

M.G. Dawood Miakhan,
Chennai

All eyes are now on the Indian Ocean region

Rajiv Bhatia
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While the Indian government's focus from January 2021 was fixed on the Indo-Pacific with a sustained endeavour to strengthen the Quad, policy attention has shifted back to the Indian Ocean since October 2023. Of course, the Indo-Pacific strategy covers both the Pacific and Indian Oceans, but when danger deepens, the immediate neighbourhood matters more than distant shores.

The policy shift

The Maldives, with Mohamed Muizzu as President, seems to be heading on a collision course with India. Despite New Delhi's patience and diplomatic tact, Male continues to deepen its embrace of China. In contrast, Sri Lanka showed greater sensitivity to India's security concerns by imposing a year-long moratorium on foreign research ships, including Chinese ones, to its ports. Last month, India's SAGAR policy produced a valuable dividend as the Prime Ministers of India and Mauritius inaugurated a new airstrip and a jetty in the Agaléga Islands, boosting Mauritius's capability to curb illegal activities in its vast Extended Economic Zone.

Both the Western Indian Ocean littered with island nations and the Northern Indian Ocean stretching from the Arabian Sea to the Suez have become active geographies again. The gradual regionalisation of the Israel-Hamas conflict, as reflected in the attacks by Houthi rebels on international shipping, has now led to a massive drop in transits through the Suez Canal. The diversion of ships to the longer route around the Cape of Good Hope adversely affects all nations in the region, big or small.

The new chain of developments is set to expand the Chinese Navy's footprint in the region. Its broad objective is to assert dominance. With the Maldives as a willing partner, Beijing lost little time in announcing a new agreement under which unspecified military assistance would be extended gratis to Maldives. This comes when 88 Indian military personnel, deployed with the host nation's consent to operate humanitarian flights of three aviation platforms, has been replaced by a civilian group.

Both the Western Indian Ocean and the Northern Indian Ocean have become active geographies again

The strategic contestation between China and India is intensifying. Much of China's trade and energy supplies pass through the region, so its case for security for its supply routes cannot be dismissed. But what is worrisome is its strategic intent to create an adverse environment for India's security by turning the country's neighbours against it. A clear pattern is emerging behind Beijing's quest for naval bases in Djibouti, Kyaukphyu, Gwadar, and Hambantota. This, combined with the nearly four-year-old border standoff, which has defied a diplomatic resolution, has meant the two nations continue to confront each other as adversaries.

India has been facing a "bully" in a very "determined manner," observed India's defence secretary recently. He spoke not only of the border situation but also of the Indo-Pacific where "a pivotal moment" was being witnessed. India and the U.S., he underlined, were key stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific region. Cooperation helps them in addressing the strategic competition with China. Collaboration in underwater domain awareness has been identified as a key goal in dealing with the "emerging" threats.

Besides the U.S., where do the U.K., European Union, France, and Germany stand as far as Indian Ocean rivalries are concerned? Geographic proximity to the region demands that they take a clear line on China's activities. While they are concerned about Beijing's illegal claims in the South China Sea, they must see that a similar kind of assertiveness and hostile intent is building up in the Indian Ocean too. Each of these players seeks closer economic and security cooperation with India, and incremental progress is taking place. But they display a 'studied ambiguity' when it comes to interpreting China's behaviour and the long-term motivations driving it. The geographic distance of the European nations from China gives them a sense of security. They should re-examine the fundamental tenets of their Asia strategy. But will they, given their excessive preoccupation with the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza? Recent interactions with European officials and scholars generate limited hope; therefore, the task to persuade them must go on.

India's other options

The government has other options too. First, India needs to convey a clear message to its strategic partners that while it is conscious of its Indo-Pacific responsibilities, it prioritises the Indian Ocean region. Second, a critical audit of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) is needed. While IORA is underperforming and has become too amorphous to be effective, the CSC faces the danger of losing a key member, the Maldives, if the island nation's partnership with China deepens. It may be time for New Delhi to encourage the creation of a new mechanism with the objective of bolstering maritime security and optimising the potential for the Blue Economy. This group could comprise four nations from the neighbourhood (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar) and four island states (Mauritius, Seychelles, Comoros, and Madagascar). The ninth seat may be kept for the Maldives if it adopts a sensible policy. This group can be named the 'Indian Ocean Cooperation Organisation.' Third, *Foreign Affairs Insights & Review* ranked the Indian Navy the seventh most powerful in the world. As India aims to become the third largest economy, it should find new budgetary resources for its Navy to make it the third or fourth strongest.

It's raining tickets for turncoats

In Telangana, the BRS is facing the brunt of defections

STATE OF PLAY

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The Congress, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are all fielding turncoats to improve their chances in the Lok Sabha elections. However, the party that is facing the brunt of these defections is the BRS.

Defections galore

In the 2019 elections, the BRS won nine Lok Sabha seats, followed by the BJP with four, and the Congress with three. But today, five BRS MPs – B. Venkatesh Nethakani (Peddapalli SC), B.B. Patil (Zaheerabad), P. Ramulu (Nagarkurnool SC), Pasunuri Dayakar (Warangal SC) and G. Ranjit Reddy (Chevella) – have already defected to other parties. While Mr. Venkatesh, Mr. Dayakar, and Mr. Ranjit Reddy have crossed over to the Congress, the other two have defected to the BJP. Mr. Patil was named a BJP candidate from Zaheerabad a day after joining the saffron party and Mr. Ramulu's son, P. Bharat, has been chosen as the BJP's Nagarkurnool candidate.

Sensing the deepening crisis, party supremo K. Chandrashekar Rao announced the BRS's first list of candidates for four Lok Sabha seats. The names included two sitting MPs – Nama Nageswara Rao (Khammam) and Maloth Kavitha (Mahabubabad). Had he not acted in time, the two leaders would have mostly left the party, say sources.

But the BRS remains wary of the intentions of its remaining MPs. Mr. Rao and BRS executive working president K.T. Rama Rao have been holding meetings with leaders at the parliamentary constituency level to instil confidence in them.

The only solace for the BRS was the decision of Telangana Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president and former IPS officer R.S. Praveen Kumar to join the party. Last week, the BRS and BSP announced an alliance after Dr. Kumar met with Mr. Rao. This came as a big relief for Mr. Rao as the BRS was hard-pressed for a candidate in the Nagarkurnool SC constituency, where the sitting MP had crossed over to the BJP. When the BSP leadership reportedly forced the State unit chief to call off the alliance, Dr. Kumar quit and joined the BRS and is now set to contest from Nagarkurnool.

Dr. Kumar hails from the influential Madiga sub-caste among the SCs, who form at least 10% of the Dalit voters in Telangana. The total SC population in the State is 18%. Parties have always tried hard to attract the votes of the Madigas ahead of the polls. Earlier last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended a rally organised by the Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti leader, Manda Krishna Madiga, who wields considerable influence in the community. But the rally did not benefit the BJP in the Assembly elections.

Upsetting leaders within

Meanwhile, the BJP too is busy inducting leaders from other parties. The State leadership seems to have taken the Central leadership's aim of 400-plus Lok Sabha seats very seriously. It is now focused on winning every MP seat in Telangana. The party has so far named 15 candidates. It has given tickets to many turncoats, even as party loyalists continue to wait impatiently for an opportunity. The BJP has accommodated leaders from the BRS in Mahabubabad, Zaheerabad, Peddapally, Adilabad, and Nalgonda, which has upset longstanding leaders in the party. Turncoats are also expected to be announced for two more seats – Warangal and Khammam. The party has so far retained only three sitting MPs – Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy (Secunderabad), national general secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar (Karimnagar), and Dharmapuri Arvind (Nizamabad). The BJP does not seem particularly worried about whether these turncoats will stay with it in the event of its loss in the elections.

Meanwhile, the Congress is riding high on the massive support it had received from the SCs and Scheduled Tribes in the Assembly elections. While it is giving tickets to strong candidates from the party, the Congress, too, is not averse to giving tickets to leaders from rival parties. Buoyed by its impressive performance in the Assembly elections, the party is keen to establish its dominance in the State.

While the Congress is fighting from a position of relative confidence since five of its six guarantees have already been implemented, the BRS, which was strong just five years ago, seems to be fighting in desperation to prevent more fissures in the party. The BJP is trying to induct as many leaders from the rival parties so that it can better its 2019 tally. It looks like the outcome will depend to a considerable extent on the performance of the turncoats.

Bonds in buckets: who got how much in the first two years

A look at the donors and political parties that encashed electoral bonds in four periods between April 12, 2019 and April 19, 2021

Details of bond purchases and encashments

Last week, the Election Commission of India (ECI) put up the list of donors who purchased electoral bonds and the political parties that encashed them. On Monday, the Supreme Court asked the State of Bank of India to make a "complete disclosure" of electoral bonds data including their unique hidden serial numbers by Thursday. While the numbers that link the purchasers and the donors are awaited, the following tables take a look at the share of bonds purchased and encashed across various dates, for which information is currently available in the public domain. By **Rebecca Rose Varghese** and **Gautam Doshi**

2019 LS polls: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between April 12, 2019 and May 10, 2019 coinciding with the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. It also looks at the parties that got the highest share of the bonds encashed between April 12, 2019 and May 22, 2019

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Keventer Foodpark Infra	13.1%
Madanlal Ltd.	12.5%
MEIL*	8.4%
Essel Mining & Industries	3.4%
Vedanta	3.3%
PHL Finivest	2.7%
Lakshmi Niwas Mittal	2.4%
Sun Pharma	2.1%
Navayuga Engineering Company	2.0%
Interglobe Real Estate	1.3%
Grasim Industries	1.3%
Finolex Cables	1.3%
Bajaj Finance	1.3%
Haldia Energy	1%
Bharti Airtel	1%

Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	84%
Congress	8%
All India Trinamool Congress	2.5%
Bharat Rashtra Samithi	1.8%

■ *Keventer Foodpark Infra bought ₹195 crore worth of bonds (13.1% of total purchases in the period), followed by Madanlal Ltd. (12.5%) and Megha Engineering and Infrastructures* (8.4%). In case of parties, the BJP encashed ₹1,771.5 crore worth of electoral bonds in the period (84% of bonds encashed) followed by the Congress at 8%*

■ *It is important to note that in this bucket, the full list of donors has not been revealed yet. For instance, parties could have encashed some amount of the bonds that they received in the 15 days before April 12, 2019 as well*

Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Delhi polls: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between July 5, 2019 and January 22, 2020, just before and during polls in these States. It also looks at the parties that got the highest share of the electoral bonds encashed between July 11, 2019 and February 3, 2020

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Infina Finance	9.8%
DLF Commercial Developers	8.4%
Avees Trading Finance	6.7%
NCC Ltd.	5.6%
Navayuga Engineering Company	4.2%
Cipla Ltd.	4.2%
MKJ Enterprises	4%
Kaypee Enterprises	3.9%
UPL Ltd.	2.8%
Torrent Power	2.8%
S D Corporation	2.8%
Raju Kumar Sharma	2.8%
DLF Luxury Homes	2.8%
Apco Infratech	2.8%
Haldia Energy	1.9%
Mahalaxmi Vidyut Pvt. Ltd.	1.7%
Ultra Tech Cement	1.4%
Torrent Pharmaceuticals	1.4%
Prestige Southcity Holdings	1.4%
Prestige Notting Hill Investments	1.4%

Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	70.5%
All India Trinamool Congress	13.3%
Biju Janata Dal	5.6%
Shiv Sena	4.7%
Nationalist Congress Party	3.2%
Congress	2.2%

■ *The share of Infina Finance was 9.8% of total purchases in the period, followed by DLF Commercial Developers Ltd. (8.4%). In case of parties, BJP's share was 70.5% of the total bonds encashed followed by the All India Trinamool Congress at 13.3%*

Oct.-Nov. 2020: The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between October 19, 2020 and October 28, 2020. It also looks at the parties with the highest share in the electoral bonds encashed between October 22, 2020 and November 7, 2020. This period also coincided with the Bihar elections

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Future Gaming and Hotel Services	53.1%
MEIL	7.1%
Essel Mining & Industries	7.1%
Haldia Energy	5.3%
Utkal Alumina International	3.5%
Ultra Tech Cement	3.5%
Grasim Industries	3.5%
S N Mohanty (individual)	2.8%
Welspun Corporation	2.5%
Penguin Trading & Agencies	1.8%
Jindal Saw	1.8%
G R Infraprojects	1.8%
Ardent Steel	1.4%
Genus Power Infrastructures	1.1%
Bajaj Auto Ltd.	1.1%

Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
YSR Congress Party	31.5%
DMK	28.3%
Biju Janata Dal	23.7%
Bharatiya Janata Party	**7.4%**
All India Trinamool Congress	6.2%
Congress	1.1%
Aam Aadmi Party	1.1%

■ *Future Gaming and Hotel Services formed 53.1% of total purchases in the period, followed by Megha Engineering and Infrastructures (7.1%). In case of parties, YSR Congress Party's share was 31.5% of the total bonds encashed followed by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's 28.3% and Biju Janata Dal's 23.7%*

■ *The donor and purchaser lists were sourced from the ECI's disclosure on March 14*

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Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Puducherry The table looks at the companies/individuals with the highest share in total electoral bonds purchased between January 4, 2021 and April 9, 2021. It also looks at the parties with the highest share in the electoral bonds encashed between January 7, 2021 and April 19, 2021. The period coincides with the State elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry

Companies that bought electoral bonds	% of total purchase
Future Gaming and Hotel Services	14.8%
MEIL	10.6%
Haldia Energy	7.5%
Essel Mining & Industries	7.4%
Rungta Sons Pvt..Ltd.	6.8%
Phillips Carbon Black	4.1%
Honeywell Properties	4.1%
Bharti Telemedia	4.1%
Vedanta	3.4%
Infina Finance	3.4%
Rahul Bhatia	2.7%
Chander Commercials	2.7%
Misrilall Mines	2%
DLF Commercial Developers	1.4%
Torrent Power	1%
Torrent Pharmaceuticals	1%

Parties that encashed electoral bonds	% of total encashed
Bharatiya Janata Party	39.7%
Biju Janata Dal	**15.7%**
DMK	14.4%
All India Trinamool Congress	11%
YSR Congress Party	8.9%
Congress	8.9%

■ *Future Gaming and Hotel Services formed 14.8% of total purchases in the period, followed by Megha Engineering and Infrastructures (10.6%), Haldia Energy (7.5%), Essel mining at 7.4% and Rungta Sons (6.8%). In case of parties, Bharatiya Janata Party's share was 39.7% of the total bonds encashed followed by the Biju Janata Dal's 15.7%, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's 14.4% and All India Trinamool Congress' 11%*

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 19, 1974

Grant of leave to MPs during Parliament session questioned

New Delhi, March 18: Can a Member of Parliament be granted leave of absence from the sittings of the House for attending to work relating to his factory or constituency? The Lok Sabha was faced with this question for the first time to-day.

The question was posed by Mr. Hiren Mukherjee (CPI), when the Speaker put before the House the report of the Committee on absence of members. According to convention, the report is passed without discussion, but Prof. Mukherjee raised some issues of principle.

He said that according to the report, two members, whom he declined to name, had been recommended leave for 57 days and 27 days respectively for work relating to their constituencies.

Another member had been recommended leave for 59 days because of trouble in his factory. These recommendations, according to Mr. Mukherjee, were "intriguing."

He said Parliament had made ample provision for members to visit their constituencies when the House was sitting.

"We are here not as delegates of constituencies. We are representatives of the people of India happening to represent a particular constituency," Mr. Mukherjee added. He could not understand a member not attending to parliamentary work, because of trouble in some factory of farm. These were symptomatic of the "decline and disarray" which parliamentary life had reached.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 19, 1924

Agriculture in India

London, March 17: Lord Pentland presiding to-day at the lecture by Sir Alfred Chatterton on utilisation of India's underground water urged that the Government of India should come to the rescue of the ryot and enable him to employ increased water facilities resulting from the latest scientific research. Sir Alfred Chatterton pointed out that the future progress of well irrigation in India depended on less expenditure methods of lifting water. He mentioned that the area under well irrigation had not increased in 20 years, while the area under state works had increased by 50 per cent.

From Page One

Disclose all details of poll bonds, SC tells SBI

The EC has to upload the information "forthwith" as soon as it is given by the bank.

The Bench clarified that its February 15 judgment striking down the electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding had specified the disclosure of data on poll bonds purchased and redeemed with effect from April 12, 2019, till the date of the verdict.

The Bench said it had taken a conscious decision to keep the cut-off date as April 12, 2019, as that was the date on which the court, through an interim order, had put the stakeholders in the case on notice to provide information. On March 15, the Supreme Court issued notice to the SBI on why the latter had not shared the alphanumeric numbers of the electoral bonds with the ECI for publication.

On Monday, the court made it clear that the unique numbers had to be disclosed to give "logical and complete effect to the ruling" of February 15. The court had intended the bank to not keep any details back from the ECI.

During the hearing, Mr. Salve said the SBI had no compunction whatsoever to disclose every other detail on the poll bonds.

Chief Justice Chandrachud questioned the SBI about the "purpose of the alphanumeric numbers". Is it only a security feature or is it to help create an audit trail?" the Chief Justice asked. The court asked how the redeeming branch had used the alphanumerics on the bonds.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, drew the court's attention to the distortion of facts and numbers, and the "witch-hunting" which had followed the judgment and the publication of the electoral bonds' data.

Chief Justice said the court's duty was over with the pronouncement of the judgment.

EC transfers six Home Secretaries, Bengal DGP

The poll body also ordered the removal of the Secretaries of the General Administrative Departments of Mizoram and Himachal Pradesh. Also on the transfer list were Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal as well as Additional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of the BMC.

In West Bengal, the State administration moved swiftly to appoint Vivek Sahay as the new DGP in place of Mr. Rajeev Kumar, who had been appointed the State's DGP three months ago. The commission's notification said that Mr. Rajeev Kumar shall be shifted to a non-election post with immediate effect.

Mr. Sahay was the Director-General and Commandant-General (Home Guards) before his new assignment.

K. Senthil Kumar who was removed from the post of Bihar Home Secretary by the commission, has had a controversial tenure, having previously served as District Magistrate of Munger and Commissioner of Patna Municipal Corporation. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had filed a chargesheet against him in 2012 in a money laundering case. The Vigilance Bureau of Bihar too had filed a chargesheet against him in a corruption case. He had also been the Health Secretary of Bihar and was appointed State Home Secretary in June 2023.

Meanwhile, according to sources at the Maharashtra Secretariat, the poll body had expressed dissatisfaction with the Chief Secretary as the State failed to comply with directives regarding the transfer of certain municipal officials who had stayed in the same post for more than two years.

The poll panel directed the Chief Secretary to transfer Mr. Chahal and other officials in the State by evening.

PMK ends suspense, decides to join NDA ahead of LS poll

The regional party in T.N. announced the move after a meeting chaired by party chief Anbumani and founder Ramadoss; it had engaged in lengthy negotiations with both the BJP and AIADMK

Udhav Naig
CHENNAI

The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) on Monday announced it would join the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and fight the coming Lok Sabha election in Tamil Nadu. Sources in the PMK said the decision was taken at a meeting chaired by party founder S. Ramadoss and president Anbumani Ramadoss, though a majority of party office-bearers and cadres reportedly preferred an alliance with the AIADMK.

Dr. Anbumani is expected to share the stage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a public meeting in Salem on Tuesday.

Over the past fortnight, the PMK was involved in laborious and extended seat-sharing talks with both the AIADMK and the BJP.

Even on Sunday, PMK sources had hinted at an alliance with the AIADMK after PMK Salem West MLA, R. Arul, met AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami at his residence in Chennai.

Surprise shift: Many PMK functionaries expressed surprise with the move by party chief Anbumani and founder Ramadoss. FILE PHOTO

PMK general secretary Vadivel Ravanan, who confirmed the alliance on Monday said, "We held the executive council meeting and met with the district secretaries and presidents. It has been decided that the PMK will form an alliance with the BJP in the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha election. We expect PMK president Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Salem," he said, adding, "The alliance decision had been taken by Dr. *Ayya* [Ramadoss]."

Mr. Ravanan said the party believed the alliance with the BJP would be beneficial to it and would secure the future of the party. A senior leader who had attended the meeting at Dr. Ramadoss' residence in Thailapuram told *The Hindu* there was an open discussion about the positives and the negatives of the alliance.

"However, since we had resolved in the general body meeting that the final decision will be left to Dr. *Ayya*, it has been decided that the PMK will face the elections with the BJP," he said, adding he, along with others, had also spoken in favour of the alliance with the AIADMK.

'Late twist'

Another PMK office-bearer from Salem said, "Till yesterday night, we all thought that we are forming an alliance with the AIADMK. This was unexpected." He further added that there were serious doubts over whether they could mobilise the PMK's vote bank in this alliance.

"Mobilising the party's voters would have been seamless if we had gone with the AIADMK. There is camaraderie on the ground. We all reiterated our opinion that we should form an alliance with the AIADMK. But Dr. Ramadoss and Dr. Anbumani said the party will ally with the BJP," he said, pointing to a difference of opinion between the district functionaries and the leadership. One of the PMK's senior leaders further stated that the PMK's decision to align with the BJP could be risky. "Now, I will not be surprised if our voters choose to vote for the AIADMK in a bid to defeat the DMK," he said.

Incidentally, the AIADMK had walked out of the NDA in September last year. The PMK has a sizeable support base in the northern districts of the State.

NDA seals poll pact in Bihar; BJP to contest 17 seats, JD(U) gets 16

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

The National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) seat-sharing agreement for Bihar was announced on Monday at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi, with the party set to fight 17 seats, one more than its biggest ally in the State, the Janata Dal (United) at 16 seats. The Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) led by Chirag Paswan will contest on five seats, and the Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and the Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM) on one seat each.

Bihar has 40 Lok Sabha seats, and all seats were accounted for in the announcement made by BJP leader Vinod Tawde.

"The BJP will be fighting West Champaran, East Champaran, Aurangabad, Madhubani, Araria, Darbhanga, Muzzafarpur, Maharajganj, Saran, Ujiarpur, Begusarai, Nawada, Patna Sahib, Patiliputra, Ara, Buxar and Sasaram. The JD (U) will fight on Valmikinagar, Sitamarhi, Jhanjharpur, Supaul, Kishanganj, Katihar, Purnia, Madhepura, Gopalganj, Siwan, Bhagalpur, Banka, Munger, Nalanda, Jehanabad and Sheohar. The five seats to be contested by LJP (Ram Vilas) are Vaishali, Hajipur, Samastipur, Khagaria and Jamui. HAM will contest from Gaya and RLM from Karakat," said Mr. Tawde.

The BJP is fighting one extra seat in comparison to the JD(U) if one looks at the seat distribution from 2019 when they fought 17 each, with six going to LJP. The Gaya seat from the JD(U)'s earlier share has been farmed out to the HAM, and Karakat to the RLM, while it gets Sheohar from the BJP. The BJP in turn gets Nawada from the LJP.

Mr. Chirag seems to have bested his estranged uncle, Union Minister Pasupati Paras, in the political stakes, with no mention being made of any accommodation in this arrangement for the latter. Mr. Paras, who represents Hajipur had staked claim to that seat but it has been handed to his nephew. RLM chief Upendra Kushwaha's supporters were reportedly upset at only being offered one seat, Karakat.

Mr. Jha, representing the JD(U) said that the election in Bihar "appeared to be a one-way poll" with the State's "aspiration" for development very evident, meaning a landslide for the NDA.

What defections say about political ideologies

NEWS ANALYSIS

Varghese K. George
NEW DELHI

The ideological barrier for entry into the BJP is as low as it is for exit from the Congress, going by the exodus from the latter and the mass migration into the former in recent days. This makes both the parties, and their leaders, appear cynical opportunists.

Careerists in the Congress have all migrated to the saffron pastures of the BJP. Does this mean that both parties form an indistinguishable barren land of absent ideology? Not quite.

There is a difference between the two parties in balancing careerist opportunism with ideological fidelity.

The BJP has maintained an ideological core and it harnesses opportunistic possibilities to maximise electoral power; the Congress, meanwhile, has shrunk into a bunch of opportunistic leaders and conveniently outsourced ideological projects to external experts who never organically connected with the party.

While the BJP has maintained an ideological core, the Congress has outsourced ideological projects to external experts. ANI

The BJP has Hindutva ideology as the core of its network; the Congress has had thoughts-on-hire groups in its peripheral networks.

The Congress confused ideological thrust with technocratic efficiency and ended up with indifferent or even hostile co-travellers.

For instance, under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, among those tasked with redesigning the school syllabus and textbooks were those calling for the death of the Congress!

While the BJP is crowding its benches with all types of people, it is not leading to a dilution of its Hindutva project; on the contrary, it is increasing its capacity to pursue the ideology.

With its ranks swelling, the BJP will eventually confront the inevitable problem of plenty, but that will be largely organisational rather than ideological. If and when the party unravels, its core cadre will still remain intact, as they did many years without power.

UPA legacy

During the 10 years in power heading the UPA, the Congress was fronted by a class of largely apolitical people who of course had a general commitment to centrist liberalism.

The Rajya Sabha coterie – which included the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh himself – kept the organisational party at bay. Young faces of the party were children of senior leaders.

The disconnect between politics and thought leadership in the party was institutionalised and celebrated in the form of the National Advisory Council (NAC), an apolitical body of experts and activists.

This arrangement between the manager-politicians who controlled power during the UPA and the external intelligentsia that theorised its governance reinforced each other's power, but undermined the party.

Those who could think politically and translate them into state policy, such as Arjun Singh, were sidelined and even humiliated.

BJP and its ideological compatriots form a symbiotic whole; the Congress has hired ideologues who form a parasitic relationship with the party.

The current structural weaknesses of the Congress are a legacy of the UPA years when power was captured by those who had not won it.

Cong. slams WhatsApp messages with Modi's letter

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Slamming the Union government over messages sent to WhatsApp users from "Viksit Bharat Sampark" accounts, Congress said the messages were a breach of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

Several people in India – and some abroad – have received messages on WhatsApp with a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Congress MP Manish Tewari said the MCC prohibits the "misuse of official mass media during the election period for... publicity regarding achievements." The MCC kicked in with the announcement of polling dates on March 16. The Election Commission declined to comment on the matter.

CWC to meet today to approve manifesto

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) will meet on Tuesday to vet and approve the party's manifesto for the Lok Sabha election.

The manifesto committee, headed by former Union Minister P. Chidambaram, had submitted the draft manifesto to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on March 6.

The party document will focus on the *paanch nyay* or the five pillars of justice and 25 guarantees that were announced during the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. They include *Yuva Nyay* or focus on giving employment to youth; *Kisan Nyay* or justice for farmers including making minimum support price a legal right; *Naari Nyay* that promises annual cash assistance to women heads of the 20% households at the bottom of the income pyramid, *Bhaagidari Nyay* or giving a share in governance to backward communities, and *Shramik Nyay* or justice for the labour and working class.

Though the main agenda of the CWC meeting is to approve the manifesto, the party's highest decision-making body could also discuss the electoral bonds data that have been placed in the public domain.

Separately, the party's Central Election Committee (CEC) will also meet to discuss and finalise candidates for the first phase of the election that starts on April 19.

Till now, the Congress has announced 82 candidates in two separate lists – 39 candidates including Mr. Gandhi in the first list while 43 were part of the second list.

PM targets Rahul for 'shakti' remark; my words twisted, says Cong. leader

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA/NEW DELHI

In the face of a political storm, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of distorting his "*shakti*" remarks and clarified that it was not made in a religious context.

Mr. Gandhi was responding to Mr. Modi's speech earlier in the day at a rally in Shivamogga in southern Karnataka where the Prime Minister accused the INDIA bloc of trying to destroy "Hindu *Shakti*". Taking a cue from the PM, BJP leaders have launched an all-out attack on Mr. Gandhi.

"Modi*ji* does not like my words. He always tries to change their meaning by twisting them in some way or the other because he knows that I have spoken a deep truth. The power that I mentioned, the power that we are fighting, its mask is none other than Modi*ji*," the Congress leader posted on X.

Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi have engaged in a war of words.

In his speech in Mumbai on Sunday at the conclusion of the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, Mr. Gandhi had raised concerns about the operation of electronic voting machines (EVMs).

"There is a word *shakti* [might] in Hinduism. We are fighting against a *shakti*. The question is, what is that *shakti* and what does it entail for us? The soul and integrity of EVMs have been traded to the king [Modi]. Not just EVMs but every autonomous institution of the country, be it the ED, CBI or Income Tax department, have traded their spines to the Centre," he had said.

Mr. Modi declared on Monday that the "fight is between those who worship *shakti* and those who wish to destroy *shakti*."

"I was in shock when I came to know that they spoke of destroying *shakti* at Shivaji Park in Mumbai. This is the place where every child grows up chanting the slogan - *Jai Bhavani, Jai Shivaji*. I don't know how badly Balasaheb Thackerey's soul must have been hurt listening to such comments," he said. Further, Mr. Modi said every woman in the country represented *shakti*.

Clarifying his remark, Mr. Gandhi said that the power he was talking about was not of a religious nature but the power of "unrighteousness, corruption and falsehood".

"It is a power that has captured India's voice, institutions, CBI, I-T Department, ED, Election Commission, media, industries and constitutional structure. For this power, Narendra Modi waives loans worth thousands of crore rupees while a farmer is forced to commit suicide on not being able to pay loans worth few thousand rupees," the Congress leader said in a social media post.

Congress reaches out to first-time voters

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

Repeatedly tripped by first-time voters, Congress is trying to walk the extra mile in this poll season bringing *yuva* guarantee cards with promises centred around employment to their doorstep.

Compared with 2019, the number of first-time voters who are classified as anyone between the age of 18 and 19, is up by 20%. A total of 1.8 crore voters fall under this category, while 19.7 crore voters fall under the age group of 20 to 29 years, whom the Congress is particularly targeting.

The unemployment rate dipped sharply from 8% in December last year to 6.57% in January this year. Even with the dip, the rate remains higher than what it used to be in the United Progressive Alliance years.

Compared to 2019, the number of first-time voters is up by 20%.

The Youth Congress has been tasked by the party to distribute these guarantee cards to at least 10,000 households in every Assembly segment. The cards list some of the assurances made by the party during the course of its Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra including Right to Apprenticeship, which promises one-year compulsory apprenticeship with a government, public or private sector organisation with a stipend of ₹1 lakh a year.

Poll bonds show use of money power in politics: BSP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In her first reaction to the electoral bonds scheme that has been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Monday pointed out how the revelations over the past week on details about electoral bonds had demonstrated the use of "money power" to try and keep the public, and public interest out of the nation's politics.

She said the BSP had purposely kept its distance from "the money power of big capitalists and the rich to avoid this kind of *quid pro quo*", adding that this was why the governments she formed in Uttar Pradesh were able to take initiatives in the interest of the public and for public welfare; and to eliminate poverty and backwardness. "Other parties are mostly engaged in serving their own interests," she said on X.

The BSP is among the few political parties which have not accepted any donations through electoral bonds.

JD(S) got poll bonds from Infosys, Biocon, JSW Steel

Documents show party received ₹48.75 crore before April 12, 2019 and ₹43 crore thereafter; its biggest donor, Embassy Group, emerged as the sole bidder of Bengaluru's pod taxi project in 2018

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The JD(S) received ₹43 crore through poll bonds after April 2019, however details of the contributors are not available. FILE PHOTO

In 2018, the party secured ₹1 crore from Infosys, ₹22 crore from the Embassy Group

The Election Commission of India on Sunday disclosed new documents listing the corporations and individuals who contributed to the Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka before April 12, 2019 through the electoral bond route. The documents reveal that these donors contributed a total of ₹48.75 crore to the party from March 8, 2018 to April 5, 2019.

Initially, these details were submitted to the Supreme Court in sealed envelopes. The top court instructed the commission to make this information available to the public.

The commission disclosed details last week of electoral bonds issued after April 12, 2019. After this date, the JD(S) received ₹43 crore, although the names of the individual donors are yet to be released.

The JD(S) is one of the few regional parties that have revealed the names of those who donated to them through electoral bonds. In 2018, the party secured ₹1 crore from Infosys Technologies, ₹22 crore from the Embassy Group, ₹25 lakh from Health Care Global Enterprises, and ₹50 lakh from Biocon, the biopharmaceutical company founded by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.

Notably, according to media reports, the Embassy Group – the biggest donor to the JD(S) – was part of a consortium that emerged as the sole bidder of Bengaluru's controversial pod taxi project in January 2018. It also signed an MoU with the Karnataka government in March 2019 "for the all-round development of children in Bangalore", according to the company's website.

In 2019, a contribution of ₹10 crore was made by a Hyderabad-based company named Megha Engineering and Constructions – distinct from Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL), which is ranked second among companies that purchased the highest amount of electoral bonds (by value). The party also got ₹5 crore from JSW Steel Ltd., India's second largest private sector steel company. The Biocon group donated ₹1 crore again in 2019, taking their total tally to 1.5 crore. Shahi Exports Ltd., the largest apparel manufacturing company in India, also donated ₹1.5 crore. Finally, the Aditya Birla group donated ₹50 lakh and the Amar Raj Group ₹2 crore.

In May 2019, the Karnataka government led by the then Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy decided to execute a lease-cum-sale agreement with JSW Steel Ltd., pertaining to 3,666 acres of land allotted to the company in 2006-07. The JSW had paid for the land at the guidance rate at the time and was asked to pay the difference from the current rate at the time.

NCP encashed bonds worth ₹37.75 crore till May 9, 2019

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The party had encashed ₹27.5 crore after May 9, 2019, for which the donor information is still not available. EMMANUAL YOGINI

The Election Commission of India on Sunday made public new documents revealing the names of companies and individuals that made contributions to the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) till May 9, 2019. The party encashed ₹37.75 crore between January 18 and May 9, 2019.

Originally, this information was provided to the Supreme Court in sealed envelopes. Details of electoral bonds encashed by the NCP beyond May 9, 2019, were disclosed by the election authority last week.

The party had encashed ₹27.5 crore after May 9, 2019, for which the donor information is still not available.

Single-day encashment

Compiling the donations encashed by the NCP via the electoral bond route, from its initial receipt on January 18, 2019, to the most recent one on April 13, 2023, reveals that its largest single-day encashment of ₹10 crore was recorded on January 11, 2022.

This significant donation was made between November 28, 2019, and June 29, 2022, a time when the NCP returned to power in the State as a member of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition.

Parties are required to encash electoral bonds within 15 days of their issuance.

The NCP is among the few parties that have disclosed the identities of contributors who donated via the electoral bond route.

In the period, for which donor information was available, the party had secured ₹7.5 crore through the electoral bonds route from Bajaj Finserv and ₹5 crore from Infina infrastructure.

It had also received ₹5 crore from Atul Chordia and ₹4.5 crore from Avinash Bhosle in the period. Their addresses were not included in the details.

Individual donor

Cyrus Poonawalla, the founder of Serum Institute of India, had donated ₹3.75 crore to the party in this period. Bharti Airtel Limited also donated ₹2 crore. The rest were from other firms and individuals.

After a split in the party in 2023, the Election Commission awarded the party's original name and symbol to a faction led by Ajit Pawar.

The group that remained with party chief Sharad Pawar was given the name NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar).

SC order on electoral bonds disclosure does not cover full details from March 2018

NEWS ANALYSIS

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday directed full disclosure of electoral bonds purchased after April 2019, but information about a chunk of poll bonds bought and encashed during the first year of the anonymous political funding scheme will continue to remain hidden from the public eye.

This would mean that full information on who bought how many electoral bonds to donate to which political party between March 1, 2018, and April 11, 2019, would continue to remain under wraps despite the fact that the Supreme Court had held the entire electoral bonds scheme, from start to finish, plainly unconstitutional in its judgment on February 15.

On March 18, the court dismissed a plea by an NGO, Citizens Rights Trust, represented by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria and advocate Sneha Kalita, to direct complete disclosure of electoral bonds' details from March 1, 2018. The court said the plea was not "maintainable" even as the NGO claimed that information on nearly 10,000 bonds worth over ₹4000 crore, bought since March 2018, was not publicly available.

'Modification in order'

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud explained to the NGO that the February 15 judgment had explicitly sought the publication of electoral bonds' details only from April 12, 2019. Allowing the NGO's application now would lead to a "substantive modification" of the February judgment.

Though the judgment had explicitly directed disclosure on electoral bonds purchased only from April 12, 2019, till February 15, 2024, a subsequent order of the court in the same case on March 11, 2024, had specifically instructed the Election Commission of India to "publish the details of the information which was supplied to this court in pursuance of the interim orders [April 12, 2019, and November 2, 2023] on its official website".

2019 order

The April 12, 2019, order of the top court had required political parties which had received donations through electoral bonds to submit to the Election Commission of India (EC) the "detailed particulars" of the donors as against each bond and the "full particulars" of the bank account to which the amount was credited and the date of each such credit. On November 2 last year, the court had directed the EC to update this data till September 30, 2023, and hand it over to the court.

So, the March 11 order had already extended the ambit of the judgment to the period prior to April 12, 2019. Besides, orders following a judgment should be read in consonance with it.

Hence, the question remains why the Supreme Court has now limited complete disclosure to electoral bonds post April 2019, and not to those bought and encashed from March 1, 2018.

SC refuses urgent hearing on industry bodies' plea

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court refused to urgently hear on Monday an intervention by industry associations against a March 15 order seeking an explanation from the SBI on the non-disclosure of the unique alphanumeric numbers of electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India for publication.

A five-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud asked senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for ASSOCHAM, FICCI and CII, on why they have come now after the pronouncement of the judgment in the electoral bonds scheme case on February 15. "The whole world knew the matter was being heard by us. You file an application now?" Chief Justice Chandrachud asked Mr. Rohatgi.

Justice B.R. Gavai also questioned the timing of Mr. Rohatgi's clients.

The senior lawyer clarified that the industry associations had "no problem" with revealing the donors or the recipients under the scheme. "My problem is with the March 15 order," he submitted.

The Chief Justice said that the Bench had no applications filed by the industry associations before it. Mr. Rohatgi insisted that the application was filed in the morning.

"There is no application on board. The application may not be numbered or registered... We will deal with it in due course. There is no oral mentioning... You appear for big clients... If we allow you to mention orally, what face will I show to a junior advocate who wants to do the same... Now, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," Chief Justice Chandrachud addressed the senior advocate.

In a statement, Federation Of Indian Chambers Of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) confirmed that it had, along with ASSOCHAM and CII, filed an intervention application.

FICCI said it believed that ease of doing business was a key element of India's competitiveness globally. "Retrospective actions lead to reduction of business confidence for Indian and global investors. This was the basis for our application. FICCI believes in fostering a conducive environment for economic development, where the private sector will contribute to the growth of India to the third largest economy," the statement said.

e-dit
CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF IMAGING TECHNOLOGY (C-DIT)
Thiruvananthapuram-27
Ph: 0471-2380910/912

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited for the **Printing and Supply of High Security Document**

For details visit www.cdit.org

Last date of submission of bids: **26.03.2024 03.00 PM.** Tender will be opened on the same day at 03.30 PM

18.03.2024 Registrar, C-DIT

e-dit
CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF IMAGING TECHNOLOGY (C-DIT)
Thiruvallam, Thiruvananthapuram - 27
Ph: 0471 - 2380910 / 912 / 895

E-TENDER NOTICE

e - tenders are invited for the following works.
"Supply of chemicals on rate contract basis"
(Tender id : 2024_CDIT_671060_1)
For details and online submission of bids visit **www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**
Last date of online submission of bids: **26.03.2024, 3.00 PM.**
18.03.2024 Registrar, C-DIT

THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY
(A Central University) HYDERABAD – 500 007

EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION No. I/2024

The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, a Central University, invites applications from the eligible candidates for the post of **Registrar**, **Finance Officer**, and the **Controller of Examinations** through **Direct Recruitment/Deputation** on Tenure basis in the pay level of 14 (**Rs. 1,44,200 to Rs.2,18,200**) as per 7th CPC pay matrix.
Application forms and the information regarding the eligibility criteria such as Essential Qualifications, Experience, Age etc., can be downloaded from the University website **www.efluniversity.ac.in.**
The filled in applications should reach the University on or before :**10-04-2024**
Date:18-03-2024 Sd/- REGISTRAR I/C

MAHATRANSCO Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.
INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) (LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

SRM e-Tender No. T-2417/MSETCL/CO/ Projects /Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001174)
MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.
"Establishment of 132/33kV Mukutban Substation, Dist. Yawatmal along with associated line under Amravati Zone, Maharashtra."
Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website.https://srmetender.mahatransco.in
The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 12.03.2024.
Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL

MAHATRANSCO Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.
INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) (LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

SRM e-Tender No. T-2411/MSETCL/CO/ Projects /Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001173)
MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.
"Establishment of 220/33kV Sarul Substation, Tal. Kaij, Dist. Beed along with construction of 220kV DC line by making LILO on 220 kV Beed - Manjarsumbha line under Ch. Sambhajinagar Zone, Maharashtra."
Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. https://srmetender.mahatransco.in
The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 12.03.2024.
Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL

Government of Karnataka
THE SPECIAL OFFICER AND COMPETENT AUTHORITY,
(UNDER KPIDFE - IMA & OTHER SCAM)
3rd Floor, Podium Block, V.V Tower, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560001

NOTICE/INVITATION FOR E-AUCTION FOR MOVABLE ITEMS

Pursuant to attachment of movable properties by the Government under the provisions of the Karnataka Protection of Interest of Depositors in Financial Establishments Act, 2004 (KPIDFE Act) and pursuant to the absolute attachment order by the Hon'ble Special Court the Special Officer & Competent Authority(under KPIDFE-IMA and other Scam), is issuing notice for e-auction of the movables attached through e-auction on **'as is where is and whatever there is basis'**..
The intending bidders will be required to furnish Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (as mentioned against each auction in the e-portal provided by the Service Provider/Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only).

Short Description of the Movable items

Sl. No.	Description of Items	Reserve Price (Rs)	EMD (Rs)	Bid Increase Value (Rs)
	Computers and Peripherals			
1.	Black Colour Cannon Printer-2 ORTIS CPU- Black Colour -4 LG CPU-Black Colour -1 INTEX CPU- Black Colour -1 AOC Monitor- Black Colour -4 BENQ Monitor - Black Colour Micro Spike Connector Black Colour-1 Computer/Printer Cable Wires Black Colour-13	20,000/-	2,000	200
2.	Datsun- Go Car- with petrol as fuel, silver grey Colour with Registration No. MH-09-DA -4853 with Engine No. 742963 A and Chassis No. MDHZBAA OE3003871, Model 2014	1,80,000/-	18,000	2,000/-

Date of Inspection & time : **22nd of April 2024, 11 am to 2 pm, Place of Inspection:** Rayabaugh Police Station, Belagavi District
Date of Pre bid Meeting & time : **19th of April 2024,3 pm to 4 pm, Place:** O/o SPLOCA, 3rd Floor Podium Block, Visveswariah Towers, Bengaluru-01
Last date of Submission of Bid Documents & EMD Submission: **23rd of April 2024, Until 5 pm**
Date & time of E-Auction: **25th of April 2024,11 am to 1 pm**
For Registration & Online Auction, you can login to: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in (Helpdesk No: 080-46010000, 080-68948777) The interested bidders who require auction related information can contact Joint Secretary, Office of the Special Officer & Competent Authority, 3rd Floor, Podium Block, Visveswariah Towers, Dr.Ambedkar Veedi, Bengaluru-560001, e-mail ID: **splocaeauction@gmail.com** or Contact Mob. No 8217203930.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 16.03.2024
DIPR/CP/4393/Zen/2023-24

Sd/-
The Special Officer & Competent Authority
(Under KPIDFE - IMA & Other Scam)
Bengaluru, Karnataka

Court allows jailed AAP leader to take oath as MP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sanjay Singh will be taken to Parliament on March 19 to enable him to take oath as a Rajya Sabha member. A Delhi court had last week ordered the Tihar Jail authorities to facilitate the process. Mr. Singh has been in jail since October 2023 in connection with a case pertaining to the now scrapped Delhi excise policy.

In call to Rajnath, U.S. official lauds Navy's anti-piracy operation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Secretary of Defence, Lloyd Austin, appreciated the important role being played by the Indian Navy in conducting anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean Region.

This was conveyed during a telephone conversation with Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday.

The comments come against the backdrop of the over 40-hour anti-piracy operation 1600 NM from India that led to the surrender of 35 pirates and the release of 17 crew members of the merchant vessel *Ruen*. "The two Ministers discussed ways and means to implement the India-U.S. defence cooperation road map which was concluded last year," the Ministry said. Both Ministers also discussed a range of bilateral, regional security and defence cooperation issues, the Ministry said.

INBRIEF

4 coaches of superfast train derail in Ajmer; no casualties

Four general coaches and the engine of the Sabarmati-Agra superfast train derailed near Madar railway station in Rajasthan's Ajmer district early on Monday. There were no casualties and no one suffered serious injuries in the incident. Rescue teams from the Railway Protection Force and the Government Railway Police rushed to the spot. The incident occurred at 1 a.m., when the passengers heard a loud noise and felt a jerk. Rail traffic on the track was disrupted, leading to the cancellation of six trains and rerouting of two. A few passengers, who sustained minor injuries, were given first aid on the spot. North-Western Railway sources said the restoration work was started promptly.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister likely to visit India this month

Ukraine Foreign Minister Dymitro Kuleba is expected to visit India later this month, a diplomatic source has confirmed. This comes just days after National Security Adviser Ajit Doval spoke to Andriy Yermak over the phone. Mr. Yermak is head of the office of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky. "We also understand that in parallel with the ongoing fight waged by our defenders and all our people, we must do everything possible, use all diplomatic opportunities to elaborate a joint plan to achieve a lasting and just peace," Mr. Yermak had said. A visit by Mr. Kuleba will be keenly observed as it will be the first visit by a senior Ukrainian official to India since the war began.

Spring season 'disappearing' in many States, shows study

Analysis of records since 1970 reveals increased warming between Dec. and Feb. across country; at 2.3 degrees Celsius, Manipur records the biggest jump in temperature in the winter months

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Indian States have been gradually registering a withdrawal of spring, a period of relatively benign weather between the winter of January and the scorching summer of April, a 50-year analysis of meteorological records suggests.

Researchers from the agency Climate Trends calculated the monthly average temperature for 33 States and Union Territories from 1970 to the present. This was the period during which the impact of global warming has been empirically observed and for which consistent data exist. For each State or Union Territory, the rate of warming for each month was compared with each three-month meteorological season. For instance, December, January, and February are considered the winter months in meteorological terminology.

Researchers analysed records of 50 years, the period during which global warming impact has been empirically observed. FILE PHOTO

Significant trend

Every region analysed had a 'net warming' during winter. Manipur had the biggest change since 1970 (2.3 degrees Celsius), while Delhi had the smallest (0.2 degree Celsius). "Winter is the fastest warming season for 12 out of the 34 States and territories considered. This is second only to autumn, which was the fastest warming season in 13 regions," the analysts noted.

There were significant differences in the pattern of temperature changes during the winter. The southern part of the country had "strong" warming in December and January. Sikkim (2.4 degrees Celsius) and Manipur (2.1 degrees Celsius) had the largest changes in temperature in December and January, respectively. The northern part of the country had weaker warming and even cooling during December and January.

Delhi had the lowest rates during this period (-0.2 degree Celsius in December, -0.8 degree Celsius in January), and among the States, Ladakh (0.1 degree Celsius in December) and Uttar Pradesh (-0.8 degree Celsius in January) had the lowest warming rates.

Sharp change

The pattern changes dramatically between January and February. All regions have warmed in February but the warming is especially pronounced in many of the regions that showed cooling or low warming in the previous months. Jammu and Kashmir had the highest warming (3.1 degrees Celsius) and Telangana had the lowest (0.4 degrees Celsius).

In northern India, the contrast between January trends (cooling or slight warming) and February (strong warming) implied that these regions now have the potential for abrupt transitions from cool winter-like temperatures to the much warmer conditions that traditionally occurred in March.

The biggest jump in warming rates occurred in Rajasthan, where the warming in February was 2.6 degrees Celsius higher than in January. A total of nine States and Union Territories showed a January-February difference of more than 2 degrees Celsius: Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand. "This supports the reports that it feels like spring has disappeared in many parts of India," the report noted.

Meteorologists have earlier ascribed the warming of winter in South India and the lack of rainfall in the North in winter due to an aberration in the pattern of Western Disturbances and the jet stream, winds that originate in the Mediterranean and bring moisture to North India during winter.

Centre notifies rules allowing transfer of 'captive' elephants

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre has notified a set of rules called the Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024 that liberalise the conditions under which elephants may be transferred within or between States.

The circumstances under which captive elephants can be transferred are when an owner is no longer in a position to maintain the elephant, the elephant will likely have a better upkeep than in the present circumstances or when a State's Chief Wildlife Warden "deems it fit and proper" in the circumstances of the case for better upkeep of the elephant.

Before a transfer within the State, an elephant's health has to be ratified by a veterinarian and the Deputy Conservator of Forests must establish that the animal's current habitat and prospective habitat are suitable. The Chief Wildlife Warden, on receipt of such documents, may reject or approve the transfer.

If the transfer involves moving the elephant outside a State, similar conditions apply. Before a transfer is effected, the "genetic profile" of the elephant has to be registered with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

A vet has to certify that the elephant is fit for travel, states one of the rules.

Other conditions - a mahout and an elephant assistant should accompany the animal, a health certificate, a quarantine period before the transfer and more - are also part of the rules.

Until August 2022, the Wildlife Protection Act explicitly prohibited the trade in wildlife including both wild and captive elephants. However, amendments to the Act brought in an exemption that for the first time allowed captive elephants to be moved.

A Parliamentary Committee, led by Congress Rajya Sabha MP, Jairam Ramesh, had recommended the deletion of this exemption clause for elephants. The final version of the amended Act, however, retains the clause.

Uttarakhand trade body rallies against 'outsiders'

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

A campaign led by a traders body in Dharchula town of Uttarakhand has asked people to not give shops and houses on rent to "outsiders", especially Muslims, flaring up tension in the area. The 'Prantiya Udyog Vyapaar Mandal-Dharchula' has cancelled the registrations of 91 shops in Dharchula over the last 40 days.

"Our organisation is meeting all the landlords who have rented their shops and houses to 'outsiders', to create awareness that these people are not just a threat to the jobs and income opportunities but also to national security as our town is a border town," said its general secretary Mahesh Gabrayal.

Vaccine for dengue may be out in markets by mid-2026, says IIL

R. Sujatha
CHENNAI

Phase 1 trial, to ensure safety, has been completed; phases to test efficacy will start soon

Vaccine for dengue could be available commercially as early as mid-2026. Indian Immunologicals Ltd. (IIL) has finished the first phase of clinical trials to determine the safety of the vaccine, the company's managing director K. Anand Kumar said. The second and third phases of trials to test the vaccine's efficacy are expected to begin shortly. IIL is a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Dairy Development Board, established in 1982.

"We have completed phase 1 trial, [which is] to determine safety. It was very successful. There have been no adverse reports. We will start phase 2 and 3 trials soon," Dr. Kumar said in an interaction with *The Hindu* in Chennai over the past weekend.

The findings of the first phase have already been published in peer-reviewed journals, he said. "We should have completed the trial in December but it was delayed by a few months. We wanted to release it in early 2026 but now, may be by mid-2026, we will be ready to release the vaccines," he added.

"For dengue, we got the virus strains from the National Institute of Virology. We will release the results of the clinical trials," he explained of the protocol requirements for any such scientific work.

The company is also developing a vaccine for the Zika virus and for the Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD).

The virus, first identified in 1957 in Karnataka's forests, is reported to have infected 400 to 500 people annually since then. Transmission in humans occurs through an infected tick's bite or due to contact with an infected animal, especially a sick or dead monkey.

"The ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) has agreed in principle to help undertake, bear all the cost for clinical trials for the Zika vaccine and we are discussing co-developing the vaccine for KFD along with the Council," Dr. Kumar said.

In January this year, the company launched the Hepatitis A vaccine, Havisure. The product has taken off well, Dr. Kumar said.

8 killed as building under construction in Kolkata collapses; Mamata visits site

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Eight persons, two of them women, were killed and several injured after a five-storey building under construction in the Garden Reach area of Kolkata collapsed late on Sunday night.

The incident occurred around 11.49 p.m. The building came crashing down on nearby shanties. Those who died in the incident were residents of these shanties.

Two women – Shama Begam, 45, and Hasina Khatoon, 60, – were declared dead at a private health facility at Metiabruz on Sunday.

Akbar Ali, 34, Rizwan Alam, 23, Mohammad Wasik, 19, Mohammad Imran, 27, Ramzan Ali, 55, and Nasimuddin, 24, were declared dead at the State-run SSKM Hospital on Monday. Rescue workers were busy working through the rubble to free those trapped underneath through the night. While 18 persons sustained injuries, five of them were discharged and 13 are undergoing treatment at the SSKM Hospital and a private health facility in Metiabruz. Located in the south-western part of the city, Garden Reach is a densely populated area where high-rises have sprung up without any planning.

A rescue operation was carried out well into Monday morning to free people trapped under the rubble of the fallen building. PTI

CM meets victims

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday morning reached the accident site and took stock of rescue efforts. She also met the injured at a nearby health facility.

Speaking to journalists, she raised concerns about whether permission was taken for such construction. "I asked the Mayor whether permission was taken for the building. He said no," Ms. Banerjee said.

"We shall provide compensation for the next of kin of the deceased and for the injured persons. We stand by the distressed families and rescue operations shall continue," she posted on social media.

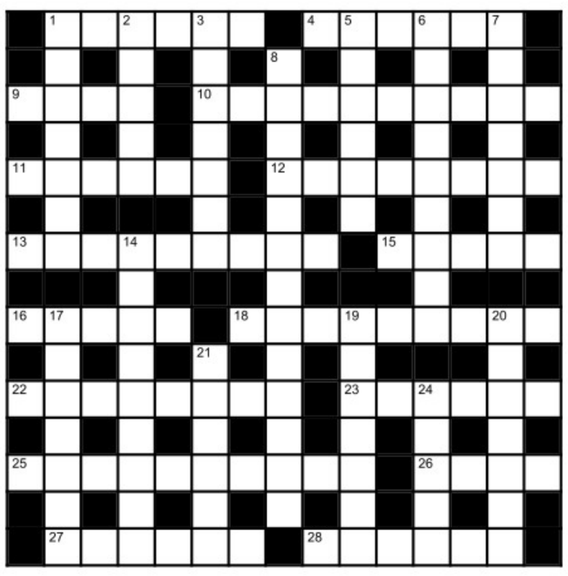
The State government announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh for the next of kin of each of the deceased and ₹1 lakh to the injured. Local people alleged that the building was constructed illegally after filling up a waterbody.

TH CROSSWORD + 14126

(set by Afterdark)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Stenographer is tawdry, lacking substance with constant small talks primarily (6)
4 Seek a point (6)
9 Press coverage ultimately was massive (4)
10 Ancient Greek Engineer - his dream? Vacate Crete to rebuild (10)
11 Constant hail and rain at the borders leading to a tunnel (6)
12 Rice came running for dessert (3,5)
13 Function outside college? Be sure really (9)
15 Tired judge and lawyer retiring to bed discarding first brief (5)
16 Clash in college union (5)
18 One very clueless, lacking line and class to pinch a type of figure (9)
22 Immature, green and soulless, partying behind university (8)
23 Indulge with commanding officer, guards and stranger (6)
25 Indian cricketers, say, use lobby in trouble (4,2,4)
26 Aruna belligerently strangled the first victim (4)
27 Leaders from Tamil Nadu irritated regarding antagonism, devolution, equality leading to outburst (6)
28 Withdraw ill-made decree (6)

Down

1 Tamil Nadu's basic problem is saving north Adyar inlet, one getting huge waves (7)
2 Irritate Kamala Harris, say, on retirement before start of election (5)
3 Tool found at bridge near corner road (7)
5 Scrap metal one pushed forward (6)
6 Drunk with wines essentially, Brian & Ted are footloose (9)
7 Lift given by new valet behind the last gate on East (7)
8 Small weaknesses lead to pains masking problem by scoundrels (8,5)
14 There's no answer to son of Cesar converting to a Catholic, say (9)
17 Rugby term coined by league in Spain revealed (4-3)
19 Release on screen (7)
20 Once, say Centre often picked interpreter of scriptural text (7)
21 Be bold enough to capture North, some damage can be repaired (6)
24 Fish found on coast (5)

SUDOKU

	3	2					6	9
			5			8	3	
			9	1				
	1	3		8				4
9				6		7	8	
				3	9			
	2	8			4			
7	9					6	2	

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

	A	U	X	I	L	I	A	R	Y	V	E	R	B	
S		N		P		R		E		A		E		B
T	O	D	O	S		A	N	A	L	G	E	S	I	A
R		E		O		Q		D		U		E		N
A	I	R	Y	F	A	I	R	Y		E	J	E	C	T
I		G		A				M				D		A
G	N	O	C	C	H	I		A	L	Y	S	S	U	M
H				T		N		D		E				W
T	I	C	K	O	F	F		E	E	L	L	I	K	E
F		H				L				L		N		I
A	L	A	R	M		U	N	K	N	O	W	I	N	G
C		T		U		E		A		W		T		H
E	M	E	R	G	E	N	C	Y		I	D	I	O	T
D		A		U		Z		A		S		A		S
	H	U	M	P	B	A	C	K	W	H	A	L	E	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	1	7	5	4	3	8	6	2
8	6	4	1	2	7	3	5	9
2	3	5	6	9	8	7	4	1
7	5	3	2	1	9	6	8	4
4	9	1	8	3	6	2	7	5
6	2	8	7	5	4	9	1	3
5	7	9	3	6	1	4	2	8
1	4	6	9	8	2	5	3	7
3	8	2	4	7	5	1	9	6

FAITH

Gajendra Moksha message

Huhu, a Gandharva (celestial musician), was once sporting in a lake. Sage Devla too entered for a bath at that time. The haughty Gandharva pulled the sage by the leg underwater and played a prank. The sage cursed Huhu to be born as an alligator.

Gajendra, the king of elephants, was known by the name of Indradyumna in his previous birth. When Agasthya visited the kingdom, the king had shown scant respect and humiliated the sage. As the king was gripped by infatuation like an elephant, the sage cursed him to be born so.

Smt. Subhadhraji said in a discourse that the lives of both the Gandharva and the king are the best examples not to incur the disrespect or wrath of true devotees of God (*Bhagavatha Apachara*).

The alligator indignantly seized the elephant by the foot in the lake when it came to drink water. For pulling the legs of the sage Devla and playing a prank, the alligator was destined to cling to the foot of Gajendra.

A sincere prayer by Gajendra prompted Lord Vishnu to transcend down and rescue the elephant.

Reciting Gajendra Sthuthi gives a person the power to face any problem in life and come out of difficult situations.

INBRIEF

ARS Steels to expand TMT bars production capacity

ARS Steels and Alloy International Pvt. Ltd. (ARS Group) is set to commence operations of its expanded capacity of TMT bars by June, said MD Ashwani Kumar Bhatia. "We recently received environmental clearance for the ₹100-crore Gummidipoondi expansion project," he told journalists. The company proposes to increase the production capacity of furnace from 1.4 lakh tonnes to 2.8 lakh tonnes and rolling mill from 1.80 lakh tonnes to 2.5 lakh tonnes.

ASK Hedge Solutions unveils AIF, aims to raise ₹3,000 cr.

ASK Hedge Solutions, a subsidiary of ASK Asset and Wealth Management Group, announced the introduction of 'ASK Absolute Return Fund', an open-ended Category III Alternative Investment Fund (AIF), aiming to raise ₹3,000 crore, including about ₹1,000 crore in the next six months. "With no fixed tenure, the fund positions itself as a core portfolio holding serving as a debt-plus alternative in clients' fixed income portfolios," the entity said.

P&G India names Kumar Venkatasubramanian as CEO

P&G India has announced the appointment of Kumar Venkatasubramanian as CEO effective May 1, 2024. L.V. Vaidyanathan, the present CEO, will leave the company to pursue other personal interests after 28 years of service, P&G India said in a statement. "Kumar has played a pivotal role in P&G India's growth trajectory in various roles in his career. Before moving to P&G Australia as its CEO, Kumar was leading the sales function for P&G India," the company said.

'IT sector to see 3-5% growth in FY25, hiring to be muted'

Profitability of IT companies is expected to be resilient despite concerns about revenue growth, says rating agency ICRA, with operating profit margins expected to come in at a healthy 21-22%

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Indian IT sector's revenue growth is expected to come at a tepid 3-5% in FY25, a domestic rating agency said on Monday. The sector's hiring will "remain muted" in the near-term until the growth momentum picks up, ICRA Ratings said.

However, the companies' profitability is expected to be resilient amid concerns on topline growth, it said, adding the operating profit margins will come at a healthy 21-22% in FY25.

Cloudy outlook

Persistent macroeconomic headwinds in key markets has led to expectations of tepid IT revenue growth in FY25

- ICRA says in the first nine months of the ongoing 2023-24, the IT industry has posted a revenue growth of just 2%
- Topline growth for the first nine months of FY23 in contrast had stood at a healthy 9.2%
- ICRA expects hiring activity to remain muted, but added attrition levels will stabilise over the near term

The agency said in the first nine months of the ongoing 2023-24, the industry has posted a revenue growth of just 2%, as against 3-5% it had estimated. The topline growth for the first nine months of FY23 had stood at 9.2%.

Persistent macroeconomic headwinds in key markets, which has led to lower discretionary IT spends by corporate has led to expectations of tepid revenue growth even in FY25, its sector head Deepak Jotwani said.

While it expects hiring activity to remain muted, the agency said the attrition levels will stabilise over the near term, inching closer to the long-term average of 12-13%, as overall slowdown in growth momentum and strong hiring in the previous fiscal has corrected the demand-supply mismatch.

Tata Steel UK to cease operations of coke ovens at Port Talbot

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Tata Steel UK said it would cease operations of the coke ovens at the Port Talbot facility, in Wales, following a "deterioration of operational stability."

The company said it would increase coke imports to offset the impact of the coke oven closures.

Tata Steel had previously stated that many of its heavy-end assets in Port Talbot were at their end-of-life capability.

'In talks with unions'

"Tata Steel is currently at an advanced stage of consultations with trade unions... on its proposal for the planned restructuring involving closure of the iron and steelmaking assets at Port Talbot, and subsequent transition to sustainable low-CO2 steelmaking involving a £1.25 billion investment in Electric Arc Furnace technology in Port Talbot and asset upgrades," the company said in a statement.

Tata Sons to sell TCS shares worth up to $1.13 bn

Reuters
MUMBAI/BENGALURU

Tata Sons will sell shares in IT services unit Tata Consultancy Services worth up to ₹93.62 billion ($1.13 billion) on Tuesday, according to a term sheet seen by Reuters.

Tata Sons will offload 23.4 million shares, representing 0.65% of TCS's shareholding. It held a 72.4% stake in TCS as on Dec. 31.

TCS shares will be sold at a floor price of ₹4,001 apiece, a 3.7% discount to the last close of ₹4,152.5.

China's upbeat industrial output, retail sales diluted by frail realty

Reuters
BEIJING

China's factory output and retail sales beat expectations in the January-February period, marking a solid start for 2024 and offering some relief to policymakers even as weakness in the property sector remains a drag on the economy and confidence.

Monday's data join recent better-than-expected exports and retail inflation indicators, providing an early boost to Beijing's hopes of reaching what analysts have described as an ambitious 5% GDP growth target for this year.

"China's activity data broadly stabilised at the start of the year," said Louise Loo, China economist at Oxford Economics. "But there are still reasons to think some of the strength could be one-off."

Industrial output rose 7% in the first two months, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Monday, above expectations for a 5% increase in a Reuters poll and faster than December's 6.8% growth. It also marked the quickest expansion in almost two years.

Retail sales rose 5.5%, slowing from a 7.4% increase in December but beating an expected 5.2%.

A protracted crisis in the property sector, a key pillar of the economy, remains a major concern.

Property sales by floor area logged a 20.5% slide in January-February from a year earlier. compared with a 23% fall in December last year.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	72,748	0.14
US Dollar	82.90	-0.04
Gold	66,140	-0.01
Brent oil	86.40	–

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3111.75	-20.45
Adani Ports	1266.60	-16.40
Apollo Hosp	6136.55	153.35
Asian Paints	2846.50	-21.05
Axis Bank	1061.35	14.95
Bajaj Auto	8521.80	171.10
Bajaj Finserv	1577.05	5.60
Bajaj Finance	6504.65	-9.70
Bharti Airtel	1225.30	5.30
BPCL	582.30	-4.15
Britannia Ind	4980.00	5.80
Cipla	1488.45	0.40
Coal India	421.85	6.60
Divis Lab	3506.60	21.20
Dr Reddys Lab	6341.05	56.15
Eicher Motors	3699.70	-45.95
Grasim Ind	2203.10	6.00
HCL Tech	1643.40	-3.90
HDFC Bank	1446.05	-6.60
HDFC Life	634.10	1.75
Hero MotoCorp	4554.20	-31.10
Hindalco	531.15	-1.40
Hind Unilever	2299.95	-27.75
ICICI Bank	1081.20	0.85
IndusInd Bank	1480.70	-3.65
Infosys	1602.65	-31.35
ITC	417.45	-1.65
JSW Steel	804.40	23.75
Kotak Bank	1737.90	-0.40
L&T	3561.20	24.05
LTIMindtree Ltd.	5167.45	-26.90
M&M	1856.05	56.55
Maruti Suzuki	11636.30	159.65
NestleIndia	2580.35	-23.30
NTPC	317.15	0.85
ONGC	261.60	2.85
PowerGrid Corp	264.90	-1.05
Reliance Ind	2878.95	42.50
SBI Life	1489.70	-10.30
State Bank	730.95	-0.95
Sun Pharma	1571.25	23.05
TataConsumerProduct	1186.95	-25.20
Tata Motors	972.45	26.60
Tata Steel	149.70	8.00
TCS	4152.50	-66.75
Tech Mahindra	1272.65	-9.55
Titan	3579.70	-53.50
UltraTech Cement	9611.35	-21.60
UPL	466.05	-9.10
Wipro	510.20	-6.80

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on March 18

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	82.71	83.03
Euro	90.14	90.49
British Pound	105.29	105.70
Japanese Yen (100)	55.45	55.67
Chinese Yuan	11.49	11.54
Swiss Franc	93.59	93.95
Singapore Dollar	61.81	62.06
Canadian Dollar	61.07	61.30
Malaysian Ringitt	17.52	17.60
Australian Dollar	54.31	54.53

Source:Indian Bank

Tata AIA introduces Rising India Fund; NFO to close March 31

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

> The fund will invest in firms across market caps and would be sector agnostic to harness diverse opportunities

Tata AIA Life Insurance (Tata AIA), unveiled the Tata AIA Rising India Fund on Monday.

The New Fund Offering (NFO) will remain open until March 31, with units offered at a Net Asset Value of ₹10 per unit during the NFO period.

"The Rising India Fund will invest in key sectors and companies... these include infrastructure, manufacturing, banking, digital, and defense," Tata AIA said in a statement.

"The fund will invest in companies across market caps and would be sector agnostic, enabling fund managers to harness diverse opportunities driving India's growth," it added.

To ensure capital appreciation, 70-100% investments will be in equity and related instruments and 30-0% in debt and money market instruments.

The Fund offers investors the choice of investing across market caps in one fund, the company said.

Rane Group names Harish Lakshman as Chairman

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Rane Group Chairman L. Ganesh will retire from the operating entities with effect from March 31, and will be succeeded at the helm by Harish Lakshman.

Mr. Ganesh will serve as a non-executive director on these entities and continue as CMD of Rane Holdings Ltd., the auto components manufacturer said.

"It was a privilege to serve as Chairman of Rane Group for the past 18 years," Mr. Ganesh said.

During his tenure, the group had grown from ₹1,050 crore to about ₹7,200 crore and export sales had doubled to 24%, the company said.

Hitachi Zosen's India arm forays into waste management sector

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The consortium will bid for an integrated waste processing facility in Chennai valued at ₹1,268-cr.

Japanese waste-to-energy major Hitachi Zosen's Indian arm, city-based infrastructure player VishnuSurya Projects and Infra Ltd. (VSIL) and Mumbai-based AG Enviro Infra Projects Pvt. Ltd., announced their entry into waste management in Chennai.

"We are foraying into this area to address this critical challenge of waste management in Chennai. We will focus on developing and implementing sustainable solutions for waste management. It will be our first project," said VSIL CEO Sanal Kumar during an interaction.

The consortium members will bid for the Greater Chennai Corporation's (GCC) phase-1 plan for an integrated waste processing facility at an estimated value of ₹1,268 crore, with a 20-year operations and management tenure.

GCC plans to implement this project through the Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer model of Public-Private Partnership, with full funding from the private sector.

Insurance sector attracted ₹54,000 crore FDI in last nine years: DFS Secretary

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The insurance sector has received close to ₹54,000 crore as foreign direct investment (FDI) in the last 9 years on the back of further liberalisation of overseas capital flow norms by the government, Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi said. The government increased the permissible FDI limit from 26% in 2014 to 49% in 2015 and then to 74% in 2021, he told PTI. However, he said, the permissible FDI limit for insurance intermediaries was increased to 100% in 2019.

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IL&FS's new board moves NCLAT, urges it to curb PSBs from tagging group firms as 'wilful defaulter'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The newly appointed board of debt-ridden IL&FS has urgently sought appellate tribunal NCLAT's intervention to restrain 11 public sector lenders from initiating proceedings to declare group companies as "wilful defaulters".

In its petition, IL&FS said it was aggrieved by the "blatant violation and disregard" of previous NCLAT orders by the banks. IL&FS also charged banks of taking procedural action under the garb of the RBI guidelines, and "harassing the directors" of IL&FS firms.

The banks were "issuing show cause notices, calling for a personal hearing before the wilful defaulter identification committee, threatening initiation of criminal proceedings, including initiating proceedings as well as and for declaring IL&FS companies and their current directors as wilful defaulters, as well as getting issued look out circulars," it submitted.

'Coercive actions'

"All such coercive actions/steps are attempts by the respondent banks to pressurise the IL&FS companies to directly or indirectly meet their debt demands, without having regard to the fact that the resolution/satisfaction of debts of all the creditors of

the IL&FS companies is subjudice before this tribunal," it submitted.

IL&FS has asked that the banks be restrained from pursuing proceedings against "other IL&FS companies and/or their directors and/or officers appointed after October 2018 by the IL&FS new board". It has also made the RBI a party, and requested NCLAT to "pass an order directing Respondent No. 12 (RBI) to direct Respondent No. 1 to 11 (banks) restraining them from taking any coercive action against the applicants and other IL&FS companies." It has also requested the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) to direct banks to "not take any coercive action against the applicant and other IL&FS companies and/or their directors and/or officers" during the pendency of the hearing and final disposal of the present application.

The banks are: Central Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Indian Bank, Canara Bank, Punjab National Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, State Bank of India, Bank of India, Jammu & Kashmir Bank, IDBI Bank and Union Bank of India. According to IL&FS, the banks were participating in the IL&FS resolution process to get their debts addressed and these parallel coercive steps were not only "squarely in the teeth" of the orders passed by NCLAT, but were the likely result of either a selective reading of such orders, or an "uncoordinated mechanical attempt" at purportedly complying with applicable RBI guidelines.

IL&FS's new board had already referred the actions of the erstwhile management for investigation.

GAZA STRIP

Al Jazeera says its Gaza journalist beaten, arrested by Israeli forces

AFP

Qatar-based broadcaster Al Jazeera said Israeli forces had beaten and arrested its correspondent Ismail al-Ghoul during a raid on Monday on Gaza's largest hospital. An Al Jazeera source said that five other people were also arrested. An Israeli tank destroyed the vehicle Mr. Ghoul and his team where using, the source added. AFP

HAVANA

Cubans stage rare street protests demanding electricity and food

REUTERS

Cubans staged rare street protests on Sunday over food and electricity shortages as the island suffered long outages that left some areas without power for up to 14 hours a day. A resident said, electricity was restored later in the day and "two truckloads of rice" were delivered. AFP

SOUTH KOREA

N. Korea has shipped 7,000 arms containers to Russia, says Seoul

REUTERS

North Korea has shipped around 7,000 containers of arms to Russia to use in its war with Ukraine since July, South Korea's Defence Minister Shin Won-sik said on Monday. The historical allies are both under a raft of global sanctions — Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine and Pyongyang for its testing of nuclear weapons. AFP

ISTANBUL

Turkiye moves against Meta over Threads-Instagram data sharing

AFP

Turkiye's competition authority on Monday imposed an interim measure on Meta Platforms Inc. meant to hinder data sharing between Instagram and Threads as it investigates possible abuse of the company's dominant market position. The interim measure would remain in place until a final decision is made. REUTERS

Putin extends rule after taking a landslide victory in Russian polls

With nearly 100% of precincts counted, the Russian President got 87% of the vote, says CEC; Putin says the results are an indication of the people's 'trust' and 'hope' in him; Germany slams the election process; China's Xi congratulates Putin

Associated Press

President Vladimir Putin sealed his control over Russia for six more years on Monday with a landslide in an election that followed the harshest crackdown on the Opposition and free speech since Soviet times.

With nearly all the precincts counted on Monday, election officials said Mr. Putin had secured a record number of votes.

Mr. Putin has led Russia as President or Prime Minister since December 1999, a tenure marked by international military aggression and an increasing intolerance for dissent. At the end of his fifth term, Mr. Putin would be the longest-serving Russian leader since Catherine the Great, who ruled during the 18th century.

Solid win: Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks on a visit to his campaign headquarters after a presidential election in Moscow. AP

As early results came in, Mr. Putin hailed them as an indication of "trust" and "hope" in him.

"Of course, we have lots of tasks ahead. But I want to make it clear for everyone: when we were consolidated, no one has ever managed to frighten us, to suppress our will and our self-conscience. They failed in the past and they will fail in the future," he said at a meeting with his campaign staff after polls closed.

Russia's Central Election Commission said on Monday that with nearly 100% of precincts counted, Mr. Putin got 87% of the vote. Central Election Commission chief Ella Pamfilova said nearly 76 million voters cast their ballots for Mr. Putin, his highest vote tally ever.

Western leaders denounced the election as a sham, while President Volodymyr Zelenskyy particularly criticised voting in Ukrainian areas that Russia has illegally annexed, saying "everything Russia does on the occupied territory of Ukraine is a crime".

Germany sharply criticised the vote with Chancellor Olaf Scholz's spokeswoman, Christina Hoffmann, saying that "in our opinion, it was not a democratic election."

Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un quickly congratulated Mr. Putin, along with some Central and South American leaders and presidents of nations that have historic and close current ties to Russia.

Afghan forces hit back at Pak. after air strikes kill 8

Agence France-Presse
KABUL

Border tensions between the two countries have risen since the Taliban seized power in 2021

Eight civilians were killed on Monday in "reckless" air strikes by Pakistan's military in the border regions of Afghanistan, prompting Afghan forces to retaliate against Pakistani military outposts, Taliban officials said.

Border tensions between the two countries have risen since the Taliban seized power in 2021, with Islamabad claiming militant groups are carrying out regular attacks from Afghanistan.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said Pakistani aircraft "bombed civilian homes" in Khost and Paktika provinces near the border with Pakistan at around 3:00 a.m. (22:30 GMT Sunday), adding that all of the dead were women and children.

Afghanistan's Defence Ministry said its border forces retaliated in response to the airstrikes, targeting Pakistan's military points along the disputed border with "heavy weapons".

"The country's defense and security forces are ready to respond to any aggressive actions and will defend their territorial integrity at all cost," spokesman Enayatullah Khwarizmi said on X.

Cross-border skirmishes in the region were reported by both sides into Monday afternoon.

The Taliban "strongly condemns these attacks and calls this reckless action a violation of Afghanistan's sovereignty", Mr. Mujahid said in his statement. "Such incidents can have very bad consequences which will be out (of) Pakistan's control."

Malak Noor Khan, a tribal elder in the Sperah district of Khost, said he saw at least four explosives dropped from drones and jets. "All those targeted are refugees from Waziristan, they are not militants, they are not terrorists," he said.

The Afghan Foreign Ministry said on X, it had summoned the head of the Pakistani embassy in Kabul to protest Monday's strikes. It called on Pakistan's government to "not allow some circles to complicate the relationship between two neighbouring Muslim countries".

'Famine is imminent' in northern Gaza, says UN as Israel raids hospital again

Associated Press
RAFAH

The U.N. food agency said on Monday that "famine is imminent" in northern Gaza, where 70% of the remaining population is experiencing catastrophic hunger, and that a further escalation of the war could push around half of Gaza's total population to the brink of starvation.

The alarming report came as Israel faces mounting pressure from even its closest allies to streamline the entry of aid into the Gaza Strip and open more crossings. The European Union's top diplomat said the impending famine was "entirely manmade" as "starvation is used as a weapon of war."

Israeli forces meanwhile launched another raid on the Gaza Strip's largest hospital early Monday, saying Hamas militants had regrouped there and had fired on them from inside the compound, where Palestinian officials say tens of thousands of people have been sheltering.

The military said it killed a Hamas commander who was armed and hiding inside the medical center, and that one of its own soldiers was killed in the operation.

The army last raided Shifa Hospital in November after claiming that Hamas maintained an elaborate command center within and beneath the facility.

The World Food Program on Monday released the latest findings of its Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, an international process for estimating the scale of hunger crises.

It says virtually everyone in Gaza is struggling to get enough food, and that around 6,77,000 people – nearly a third of the population of 2.3 million – are experiencing the highest level of catastrophic hunger. That includes around 2,10,000 people in the north.

It warned that if Israel broadens its offensive to the packed southern city of Rafah, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly vowed, the fighting could drive over a million people – half of Gaza's population – into catastrophic hunger.

China's Wang Yi begins diplomatic blitz with New Zealand, Australia visits

Agence France-Presse
WELLINGTON

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a rare visit to New Zealand on Monday, stressing the need to work with "friends" in the face of the "tumultuous international situation".

The trip marks the start of a diplomatic blitz through New Zealand and Australia, Mr. Wang's first visit to either country since 2017.

The whistlestop tour is expected to focus heavily on trade as Beijing looks to lessen the pain from slowing economic growth at home.

Wang Yi

Speaking in the capital Wellington, Mr. Wang said the trip was also a chance to shore up diplomatic ties that have come under strain as Beijing adopts an increasingly aggressive stance on issues such as Taiwan and the South China Sea.

"In the face of the current tumultuous international situation, we are willing to strengthen strategic communication with our friends in New Zealand on international and regional issues of common concern," Mr. Wang said.

"And we will work together to maintain peace and stability in the region and the world," he added before his meeting with New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters.

New Zealand is part of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance alongside the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Australia. But Wellington has been criticised for taking a softer line on China – putting its trading relationship ahead of its allies' security concerns.

In a statement, Mr. Peters said the talks touched on "trade, business, and people-to-people links".

Later this week, Mr. Wang will meet Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong in Canberra.

Sport

Shubham — Mumbai's meteor

PVL

Saikat Chakraborty
CHENNAI

In the midst of the craze for cricket, volleyball has found a gem that is shining bright. Mumbai Meteors' universal Shubham Chaudhary has emerged as a key player in the ongoing Prime Volleyball League.

Shubham was a big fan of the willow game and wanted to become a cricketer, even getting the jersey number of Virat Kohli by accident. "I love cricket and I played a lot during my childhood. Volleyball came much later," he told *The Hindu*.

With a tally of 134 points, the 30-year-old has been Mumbai's meteor. He managed just 46 points playing for Kochi Blue Spikers last season, but the change of dugout has worked wonders. "During the pre-season camp, we worked a lot on movement and fitness. I'm moving better and feeling better."

Despite representing Haryana at the National level, the Karnal-born Shubham is yet to break into the international stage. The impressive performances in the PVL could turn things his way. Though he has thrived as a universal, Shubham's passion lies in offence. He has scored 103 attack points with a success rate of 44.41, ranking fourth in the league.

More than the numbers, it is the way he has operated on the court that has caught the eye. He never shies away from a responsibility, either while serving in crunch moments or delivering fierce spikes when needed the most. Shubham was instrumental in helping Meteors advance to the Super 5 stage.

"I like to contribute in every department. My position demands me to be equally skilful in receiving and setting, but to be honest, I love smashing the most." Shubham credited his franchise for creating a team atmosphere where it was easy to settle in.

He felt that Meteors coach Sunny Joseph has brought out the best in him. "Training under the guidance of Joseph sir has helped me understand the game differently. I've become more disciplined, something that is required for our system," he said.

The 203cm tall hoopster said his father encouraged him to take up volleyball.

Shubham.

"My father Mahavir Singh was a State-level volleyball player and he encouraged me to take up the sport as I started to grow tall in my teenage years." The move is indeed paying dividends.

Noah and Vithya take the honours

M.R. Praveen Chandran
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The season-opener Indian Open 400m 2024 at LNCPE, Kariyavattom witnessed close races in men and women's sections giving indications of intense competition for places in the relay squad for the World Relay Championships in May.

The men's final was a three-horse race between Noah Nirmal Tom, Muhammed Anas Yahia, and V. Muhammed Ajmal.

The trio pulled ahead from the rest of the field after the first curve. Noah nosed ahead at the second bend with Anas and Ajmal in close pursuit. Noah managed to ward off his challengers to finish in 46.40s. National record holder Yahia came second in 46.48 while Ajmal was clocked 46.68. The men's event lost some gloss after Amoj Jacob pulled out before the heats due to back spasms.

Vithya and Noah... the victors. S. MAHINSHA

Vithya Ramraj and Poovamma Raju came first in their respective finals but the former was declared the winner for having a better timing. Vithya's main rival was Rupal Choudhary who was coming back from injury. Vithya hit the front after the first bend and strode effortlessly to win in 52.25s.

Poovamma and Dandi Jyothika Sri were engaged in a see-saw battle in the second final, which saw Poovamma pip Jyothika at the finish.

Poovama won 52.69s to finish second overall while Dandi Jyothika Sri was third in 52.75.

National junior champion D. Sai Sangeetha, who was reinstated after winning an appeal against foul start in the heats, led from start to finish to win the girls under-20 event in 55.30 seconds. Tamil Nadu's Naveen Kumar won the boys' under-20 event with a timing of 47.40s.

The results: Men: 1. Noah Nirmal Tom (Ker) (46.40s), 2. Muhammed Anas Yahia (Ker) (46.48), 3. V. Muhammed Ajmal (Ker) (46.68). **Boys: Under-20:** 1. Naveen Kumar (TN) (47.40s), 2. Huzaifa Qaiser (Bih) (47.66), 3. P. Abiram (Ker) (47.77).**Under-18:** 1. Piyush Raj (Bihr) (49.39s), 2. Yugank Choudhary (UP), 3. Umesh Sahani (UP) (49.93). **Women:** 1. R. Vithya Ramraj (TN) (52.25s), 2. Poovamma Raju (Kar) (52.69), 3. Dandi Jyothika Sri (AP) (52.75). **Girls: Under-20:** 1. D. Sai Sangeetha (Tel) (55.30s), 2. Mishthi Kajla (Raj) (55.70), 3. Sandra Mol Sabu (Ker) (55.97). **Under-18:** 1. Mayukha Vinod (Ker) (58.83s), 2. Latika Dharan (TN) (1:00.08), 3. Eekisha Kiran (Mah) (1:01:32).

FULL OF ENERGY

It's unbelievable batting with Virat, says RCB skipper du Plessis

NAGARA GOPAL

RCB skipper Faf du Plessis says it's "unbelievable" batting with Virat Kohli. "He is one of the favourite guys I like to bat with. He brings out so much energy in me... I feel I am fist-bumping my glove because he gets so passionate being out there in the middle," said du Plessis. "It's really infectious the way he gives that energy."

TITAN ARRIVES

'Welcome home, captain Gill! Our skipper has officially landed'

X@GUJARAT_TITANS

Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill joined the team's training camp on Monday. The Gujarat-based franchise shared pictures of the 24-year-old receiving a grand welcome while joining the team ahead of IPL 2024. "Welcome home, captain Gill! Our skipper has officially landed," Gujarat Titans wrote on X (formerly Twitter).

ENGLISH TOUCH

Luke Wood replaces injured Behrendorff in MI squad

GETTY IMAGES

Mumbai Indians has named England's left-arm fast bowler Luke Wood as injured Australian Jason Behrendorff's replacement. According to an IPL statement, Wood will join MI for ₹50 lakh. Wood has played five T20Is for England, in addition to two ODIs, and has eight T20I wickets against his name.

UPHILL TASK

Gavaskar predicts a 'very difficult' beginning for Pant with the bat

PTI

Rishabh Pant will find it "very difficult" to be at his fluent best at the beginning of the IPL, but Sunil Gavaskar expects that his knees will react better once he starts batting more. "In batting as well as wicketkeeping, the knee is quite important. So, in the beginning, we won't see the real Rishabh Pant we are used to," said Gavaskar.

Sunrisers would look for resurgence, redemption

After the wooden spoon finish in the last edition, the Cummins-led Hyderabad side will hope the good mix of foreign recruits and experienced domestic players will handle the big task

IPL-17 COUNTDOWN

V.V. Subrahmanyam

Former champion Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) would like to step on to the field with a lot of optimism this season despite having finished at the bottom of the pile in the previous edition.

Head coach, and former New Zealand left-arm spinner, Daniel Vettori should be conscious of the fact that it has to settle down into the groove very early in the league to get the momentum and more importantly sustain it.

Led by Pat Cummins, who captained Australia to the 50-over World Cup triumph, has a big task on hand – getting the combination right and bringing the best out of the domestic talent.

Explosive batters like Aiden Markram, Travis Head, the match-winning centurion in the 2023 50-over World Cup final, Heinrich Klaasen, and Glenn Phillips would be the key to the 2016 champion's fortunes.

However, it is imperative for Indians like Abhishek Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Washington Sundar and Rahul Tripathi to come good in batting.

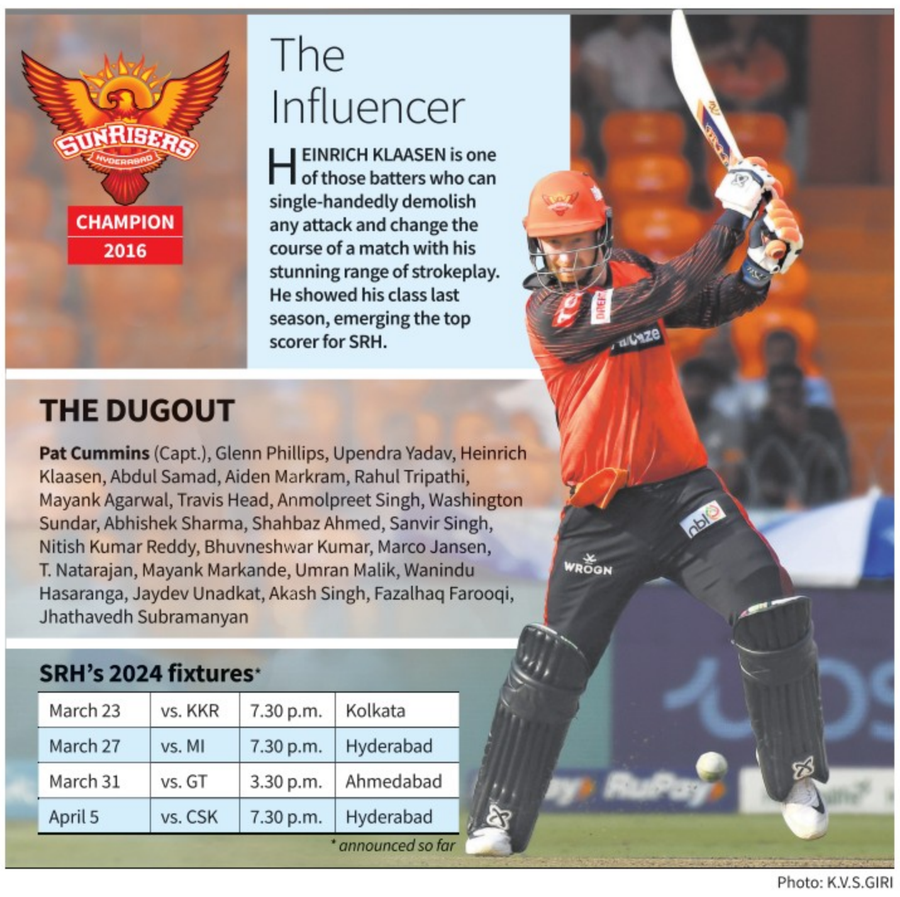

CHAMPION
2016
The Influencer
HEINRICH KLAASEN is one of those batters who can single-handedly demolish any attack and change the course of a match with his stunning range of strokeplay. He showed his class last season, emerging the top scorer for SRH.
THE DUGOUT
Pat Cummins (Capt.), Glenn Phillips, Upendra Yadav, Heinrich Klaasen, Abdul Samad, Aiden Markram, Rahul Tripathi, Mayank Agarwal, Travis Head, Anmolpreet Singh, Washington Sundar, Abhishek Sharma, Shahbaz Ahmed, Sanvir Singh, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Marco Jansen, T. Natarajan, Mayank Markande, Umran Malik, Wanindu Hasaranga, Jaydev Unadkat, Akash Singh, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Jhathavedh Subramanyan
SRH's 2024 fixtures*
March 23 vs. KKR 7.30 p.m. Kolkata
March 27 vs. MI 7.30 p.m. Hyderabad
March 31 vs. GT 3.30 p.m. Ahmedabad
April 5 vs. CSK 7.30 p.m. Hyderabad
* announced so far

Photo: K.V.S.GIRI

Dilemma

The think-tank will face a dilemma as to whom to pick from the foreign pool even as it has plenty of options in case a couple of them fail to come good.

With Cummins, wicketkeeper-batter Klaasen, and Head being certain to play in most of the matches, it would be interesting to see who among Markram, Phillips and Hasaranga would be consistently preferred in the XI.

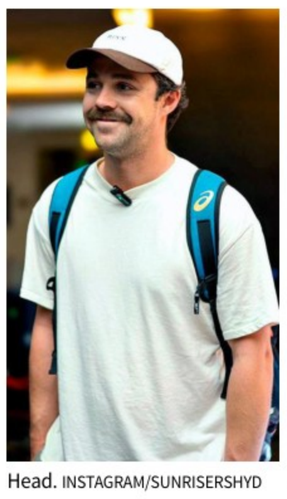
Cummins to spearhead

In bowling, Cummins will spearhead an attack which has the experienced Bhuvaneshwar Kumar, left-arm pacer T. Natarajan, the fiery Umran Malik, and left-arm seamer Jaydev Unadkat to provide the early breakthroughs.

It will be interesting to see how the middle-overs are marshalled by the likes of leg-spinners Wanindu Hasaranga and Mayank Markande, and left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed.

The Eden test

Sunrisers need to get going from the opening game against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens on March 23.



Head. INSTAGRAM/SUNRISERSHYD

Rahul's Lucknow Super Giants will be keen to break 'Eliminator' hoodoo

P.K. Ajith Kumar

Played twice. Qualified Twice.

The record certainly is not bad for Lucknow Super Giants in the world's most glamorous cricket league. It is indeed no small feat to make it to the knock-out stage on both its appearances at the IPL.

LSG's campaign, however, ended in the Eliminator match on both the occasions. K.L. Rahul's men will want to improve that record this season.

Rahul wasn't there when his team qualified for the Eliminator; he had, in fact, missed the latter stage of the tournament with a leg injury. He also had to withdraw from the recent Test series against India due to injury after playing the first match at Hyderabad. Now passed fit, and with the T20 World Cup coming up, the IPL offers an excellent chance to present his case; his last T20I was in November, 2022.

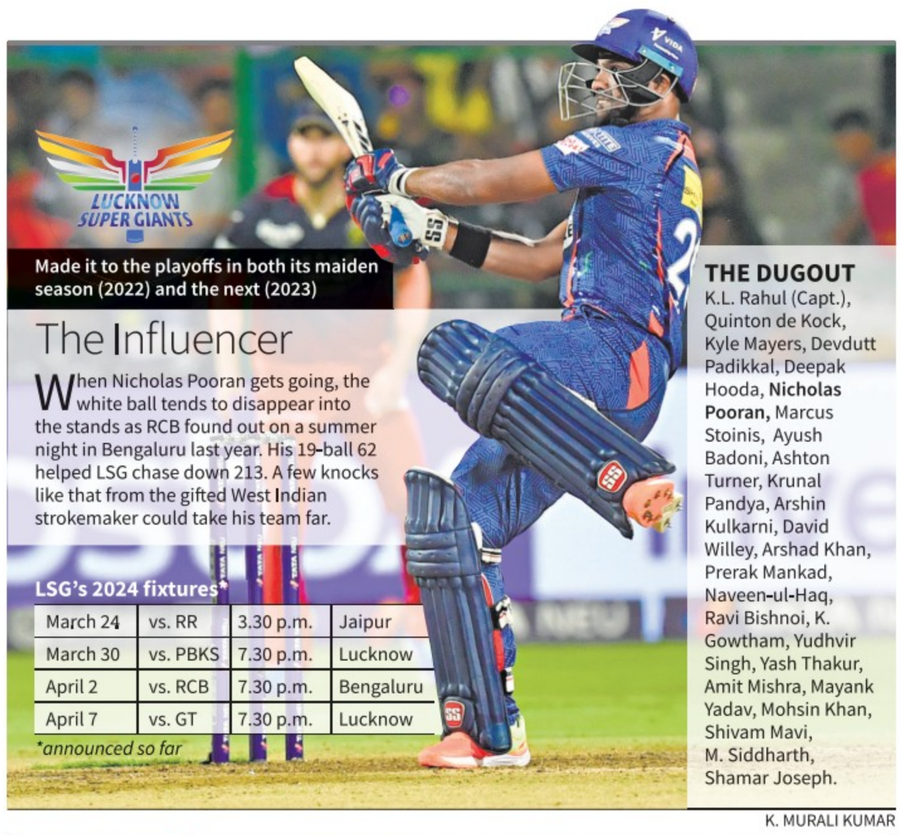
Rahul is one of the more consistent batters in T20 cricket – with an average in excess of 42 and six hundreds from 212 matches – but he has been criticised for his strike-rate, which may not be among the highest. But as long as he bats long enough, LSG may not complain.

The batting, featuring the likes of Quinton de Kock, Kyle Mayers – the West Indian was one of the pleasant surprises in his maiden season last year – Deepak Hooda and the explosive Nicholas Pooran, is strengthened further by the addition of Devdutt Padikkal. The likes of Marcus Stoinis, Ayush Badoni and Krunal Pandya ensure depth and power.

The loss of Mark Wood is a blow, but his replacement is one of the most exciting new talents in the game.

Shamar Joseph, the hero of West Indies' sensational Test win at Brisbane recently, may have little experience in T20s, but the other new overseas pace-bowling recruit, David Willey, has plenty of it; there are, in fact, more options in the form of Naveen-ul-Haq, Shivam Mavi, Yash Thakur, Mohsin Khan and the rookie Mayank Yadav, who can work up good pace.

Ravi Bishnoi will lead the spin attack, which also contains the seasoned Amit Mishra, Krunal, K. Gowtham and the new arrival M. Siddharth.


LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS
Made it to the playoffs in both its maiden season (2022) and the next (2023)
The Influencer
When Nicholas Pooran gets going, the white ball tends to disappear into the stands as RCB found out on a summer night in Bengaluru last year. His 19-ball 62 helped LSG chase down 213. A few knocks like that from the gifted West Indian strokemaker could take his team far.
LSG's 2024 fixtures*
March 24 vs. RR 3.30 p.m. Jaipur
March 30 vs. PBKS 7.30 p.m. Lucknow
April 2 vs. RCB 7.30 p.m. Bengaluru
April 7 vs. GT 7.30 p.m. Lucknow
*announced so far
THE DUGOUT
K.L. Rahul (Capt.), Quinton de Kock, Kyle Mayers, Devdutt Padikkal, Deepak Hooda, Nicholas Pooran, Marcus Stoinis, Ayush Badoni, Ashton Turner, Krunal Pandya, Arshin Kulkarni, David Willey, Arshad Khan, Prerak Mankad, Naveen-ul-Haq, Ravi Bishnoi, K. Gowtham, Yudhvir Singh, Yash Thakur, Amit Mishra, Mayank Yadav, Mohsin Khan, Shivam Mavi, M. Siddharth, Shamar Joseph.

K. MURALI KUMAR

Tuned in: The LSG players listen intently to coach Langer's inputs. SANDEEP SAXENA

I must admit Dhoni is like Benjamin Button: CSK batting coach Hussey

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings batting coach Michael Hussey on Monday alluded to the reverse-ageing fictional character Benjamin Button to convey that the CSK captain M.S. Dhoni is as match-fit as ever. He added that Dhoni has been batting as well as ever in the lead-up to the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League, which begins with CSK's home match versus Royal Challengers Bangalore here on March 22.

"He's preparing really well. His knee seems good at this stage. And he's batting extremely well at the moment. I must admit he's like Benjamin Button! He keeps getting better," Hussey said in an exclusive chat with *The Hindu* at the inauguration of the Pavit Singh Nayar Memorial All India inter-college T20 cricket tournament for men and women at the Guru Nanak College here.

Ready to roar: Hussey added that Dhoni's knee seems good and that he has been batting extremely well in the lead-up to the IPL. INSTAGRAM@CHENNAIIPL

The 48-year-old said that Rachin Ravindra and even Ajinkya Rahane might open the innings in the injured Devon Conway's absence.

"We've got Rachin Ravindra, who's coming in, who plays a similar style to Devon Conway. There are other options as well. Ajinkya Rahane played so well last year. He could also move up the order. So I'm not sure which way the captain and the coach want to go."

Asked if the young Sameer Rizvi is being looked at to play Ambati Rayudu's role from last season of scoring in quick bursts, the Australian said: "Most definitely. I think he can play that role. I mean, Rayudu is someone who has so much experience and he's played for so long. So, he's a seasoned campaigner, whereas Rizvi is just starting his IPL career.

"So, we can't expect Rizvi to be doing exactly what Rayudu has been doing for so many years. But, of course, we can start developing him and he's got a lot of natural ability. So, it's exciting to see how far he can go."

Rohit is always going to be there to help me out, says Hardik

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Hardik Pandya and Rohit Sharma are going to be in a weird situation over the next three months. Hardik will be Rohit's captain for Mumbai Indians in IPL 2024.

Hardik, in his first official interaction as the Mumbai Indians captain, insisted that there will be no awkwardness between the two. "It won't be any different because he is going to always be there to help me out. That he is the captain of Indian squad will help me because of what this team (MI) has achieved has been under him," said Hardik on Monday.

"We are just going to carry forward what he has achieved... I don't think it will be awkward. It will be nice because we have been playing for 10 years. I have played my whole career under him and I know he is going to always have a hand on my shoulder throughout the season," said Hardik.

Hardik put up a brave front when asked about his reaction to the fans' backlash for having replaced Rohit as MI captain.

"We respect the fans, but we focus on the sport. I focus on what is required (on the field) and I control the controllables," said Hardik, confirming that he is fit to bowl. "We are very grateful to the fans. They give us a lot of fame, a lot of name, a lot of love and they have every right (to criticise). I respect their opinion at the same time, I am very excited for the challenge and want to focus on the sport."

Senior pro: Hardik says he will lean on Rohit whenever the situation arises. FILE PHOTO

INBRIEF

SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Lanning put her heart and soul: Capitals coach Batty

Delhi Capitals coach Jonathan Batty lauded skipper Meg Lanning whose tactical acumen helped the side take the WPL final against Royal Challengers Bangalore to the last over at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Sunday. "She puts her heart and soul into this competition at Delhi Capitals. She's been fantastic. I guess she is disappointed as we all are, we felt we didn't do ourselves justice today. Full credit to RCB for winning tonight."

Advani in Hall Of Fame at the World Billiards Museum

India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani has been inducted to the Hall Of Fame at the World Billiards Museum in Shangrao City, Yushan, China. Seven-time World snooker champion Ronnie O'Sullivan was also bestowed the honour.

BFI and High Performance Director Dunne part ways

Boxing Federation of India (BFI) on Monday announced that it has parted ways with High-Performance Director Bernard Dunne, adding the Indian team will continue to train under foreign coach Dmitrij Dmitruk. Dunne, who was appointed as the HPD in October 2022, had sent in his resignation after the Indian team's dismal performance at this month's first World Olympic Qualifiers in Italy.

Tanzid and Rishad help Bangladesh clinch series

Rishad Hossain played an attacking innings of 48 after substitute Tanzid Hasan Tamim hit 84 off 81 balls to steer Bangladesh to a four-wicket win, and a 2-1 ODI series victory, over Sri Lanka in Chittagong on Monday. After Janith Liyanage's unbeaten 101 guided Sri Lanka to 235 all out in 50 overs, Bangladesh raced to 237-6 in 40.2 overs.

The scores: Sri Lanka 235 in 50 overs (Liyanage 101 n.o.) lost to Bangladesh 237/6 in 40.2 overs (Tanzid Hasan Tamim 84, Rishad Hossain 48 n.o., Kumara 4/48, Wanindu Hasaranga 2-64). *Bangladesh won by four wickets, clinches series 2-1.*

Barcelona breezes past Atletico Madrid

Barcelona cruised to an emphatic 3-0 win at Atletico Madrid on Sunday with goals from Joao Felix, Robert Lewandowski and Fermin Lopez, to move second in the LaLiga standings.

Runaway leader Inter Milan drew 1-1 with Napoli in Serie A on Sunday after Matteo Darmian's first-half goal was cancelled out by a late header from Juan Jesus.

The results:
LaLiga: Atletico Madrid 0 lost to Barcelona 3 (Felix 38, Lewandowski 47, Lopez 65).
Serie A: Inter Milan 1 (Darmian 43) drew with Napoli 1 (Jesus 81).

WFI Ad-hoc committee dissolved

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Monday dissolved the ad-hoc committee that ran the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), restoring full control of the federation with the Sanjay Singh-led elected body.

The IOA said there's no need to run the federation through the ad-hoc panel after the United World Wrestling lifted the suspension on WFI and the trials for Olympic qualifiers were conducted by the ad-hoc committee following the Delhi High Court order.

However, the IOA asked the WFI to appoint a safeguarding committee or officer as per the UWW instruction to address the concerns of abuse and harassment.

It also directed the WFI to conduct election to the athletes' commission as per the rules and regulations in a time-bound manner.

Veterans, young guns rising to the occasion augur well

Having two venues, Bengaluru and New Delhi, for the second edition of the tournament has helped the Indian players test themselves under challenging and different conditions

WPL SEASON 2

Lavanya L
NEW DELHI

Marshalling her troops: Smriti's journey as captain turned out to be the biggest gain of WPL's second chapter. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Two venues, a nail-biting last leg and an improved showing from India's domestic crop marked the second edition of the Women's Premier League. Royal Challengers Bangalore, a side which was headed towards yet another mid-table finish, course corrected in the best way possible, ultimately winning the title beating league leader Delhi Capitals.

This season, the Indian talent pool stepped up to the plate in crunch situations. Leg spinner Asha Sobhana, who alongside offies Shreyanka Patil and Sophie Molineux, helped RCB maintain tremendous control of run flow, particularly in the death. Mumbai Indians, which crashed out in the Eliminator, saw a star emerge in S. Sajana, whose ability to hit big sixes particularly endeared her to the crowds at games in Bengaluru and New Delhi.

In Tanuja Kanwer and 16-year-old Shabnam Shakil, Gujarat Giants saw two promising talents of different ages taking to the big stage like fish to water.

There were positives for the current Indian crop in a World Cup year. Deepti Sharma found a way to add more power to her stroke-making, finishing as the Most Valuable Player honour with 295 runs and 10 wickets to her name. Jemimah Rodrigues' 33-ball 69 against Mumbai Indians also saw her explore a way to maintain a healthy strike rate even when not clearing the fence too much. However, the lower order batters across the board have struggled to step up in crunch situations, something that cost DC the title and has hurt India several times in the past.

Two venues allowed national team players particularly to face challenging international talent in new conditions. A change in venue also snipped the predictability of the league, which the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru's small periphery and toss-based results began to cause. The Delhi leg was filled with nail-biting finishes in the final week, with even the final going down to the wire thanks to a track that stayed low but still had enough for batters to go big.

Much needs to be done by the UP Warriorz and Gujarat Giants who find themselves at the bottom of the standings this season. Giants, who finished last in season one too, need structural changes and potentially a new captain (as skipper Beth Mooney conceded) to give this team a little bite. Warriorz need to address their pace bowling deficiency ahead of the next season.

The intensity of competition makes the prospect of another team being added an exciting one, even if it comes a few seasons later. From Shabnim Ismail, who at 35, recorded the fastest delivery recorded in the women's game to 21-year-olds like Shreyanka – new age talents who know how to scorch the stage on and off the field – the women's franchise cricket ecosystem is in good hands.

Chartbusters

BATTING	Inns	Runs	HS	SR	50s
Perry (RCB)	9	347	66	125.72	2
Lanning (DC)	9	331	60	123.04	4
Shafali (DC)	9	309	71	156.85	3
BOWLING	**Inns**	**Wkts**	**BB**	**Econ**	**4W/5W**
Shreyanka (RCB)	8	13	4/12	7.30	2/0
Asha (RCB)	10	12	5/22	7.11	0/1
Molineux (RCB)	10	12	3/20	7.31	0/0

Playing domestic cricket a conscious decision: Smriti

Lavanya L
NEW DELHI

Women's Premier League-winning Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Smriti Mandhana revealed that she had a role to play in bringing Luke Williams on board as head coach here on Monday.

Having played under Williams at Southern Brave in The Hundred, Smriti admitted that his was the first name that came to her mind when the management asked her for her preference.

"I've seen Luke Williams operate for the last few years at Southern Brave and have been following his work at Adelaide Strikers as well. When the management asked me if I had anyone in mind, the first name that came to my mind was that of Luke Williams," Smriti told reporters.

The 27-year-old explained that much of the planning for the WPL was done during The Hundred and the international window.

"Charlotte Edwards is my coach there but we'd speak from time to time on what we needed to do in the auction and other things. The Hundred is where we started tracking a few players. Sophie Molineux was one of them. We were playing international cricket then and my focus was entirely there but we would have the odd phone call to discuss. We're really big on playing like a family and the biggest part of the planning went into that."

Smriti also said that her decision to skip the Women's Big Bash League to play in the Indian domestic scene went a long way in her preparation for this edition of the WPL.

"Playing domestic cricket was a conscious decision. This helped as a player and as RCB captain. I had not played domestic for a few years and sometimes when you hear names, you don't recognise them or you don't get the full picture just by watching videos.

"We have a great scouting team. But when you're facing them, even as a fielder, you realise she has a spark. Also, for me as a player, I wanted to get used to Indian conditions," she explained.

Suryakumar Yadav likely to miss MI's first two games

IPL-17

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Suryakumar. / The Hindu. FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

Suryakumar Yadav is a doubtful starter for the Mumbai Indians' first two games of the Indian Premier League (IPL), starting March 22.

The batter is still recuperating from sports hernia and yet to join the Mumbai Indians squad.

While Mark Boucher, the Mumbai Indians head coach, remained non-committal about Suryakumar's availability, *The Hindu* understands that Suryakumar is still undergoing his rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru.

Mumbai Indians will begin its campaign with away games against Gujarat Titans (March 24) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (March 27). While the franchise is optimistic about Suryakumar joining the squad ahead of its first home game on April 1, there is no clarity about his fitness clearance.

"Surya at the moment is on the guidance of the Indian cricket team as well. Just waiting for updates on that. I don't like to micromanage.

"We have got a world class medical team that's in control of all of that," Boucher said on Monday during the franchisee's pre-season media conference.

"We have had a few fitness issues. We are always going to be in that sort of domain of having fitness issues as other teams are as well. We trust our medical team that they are doing the right things. If we lose one or two from fitness perspective, it is what it is. We just have to keep on the right track and sharp on replacements."

> Surya at the moment is on the guidance of the Indian cricket team as well. Just waiting for updates on that
> – BOUCHER

It is understood that neither Suryakumar, who has been on the sidelines since last December, nor the BCCI medical team wants to rush his comeback considering his importance for India's T20 World Cup campaign in June.

Kolkata Knight Riders made me a successful leader, says Gambhir

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

Think tank: Gambhir, right, Pandit, and Arun would plan their strategies to kake KKR come on top again. PTI

Promising to make Kolkata happy this season, Kolkata Knight Riders' mentor Gautam Gambhir said the team had made him a successful leader.

On his return to the franchise, Gambhir, the two-time Indian Premier League-winning captain of the side, said, "I didn't not make KKR successful, KKR made me a successful leader. KKR meant passion, honesty, sacrifice and it meant selflessness," said Gambhir at the 'Knights Unplugged' event here on Monday.

"Dre Russ taught me a lot of things about passion. When I talk about sacrifice, this young shy boy, he has gone through so much – reported, banned, coming back and doing the same stuff years after years. I had seen his insecurities, have lived through that. He (Sunil Narine) has gone onto become one of the greatest bowlers in IPL history.

"The greatest teammate, most selfless human being, someone I can take bullet for. Ryan ten doeschate taught me selflessness. When the foundation was based on such strong individuals, KKR can never go wrong."

Coming to the upcoming season, Gambhir said, "He (Shah Rukh Khan) told me the same thing that he had told me when I joined in 2011.

'This is your franchise, make it or break it.' I can assure that whenever I leave this place we will be in a much better place."

Captain Shreyas Iyer said, "I feel honoured and privileged to be working around them (Gambhir and coach Chandrakant Pandit). Feel lucky to be having such players playing under me."

Confident

Pandit, who said the side led by Nitish Rana did well despite the constraints last season, sounded confident about the team composition this season.

"The balance that we have in our team, not only individuals but the support staff, (is important).

KKR launched the 'Knight Club Plus' app, and its team jersey ahead of the 2024 season of the Indian Premier League.

The franchise presented 19 of its players, including Shreyas, vice-captain Nitish, costliest buy Mitchell Starc, comeback man Manish Pandey, and match winners Andre Russell and Rinku Singh at the event.

Alcaraz defends title; Swiatek has it easy

TENNIS

Agence France-Presse
INDIAN WELLS

Carlos Alcaraz cruised home in a 7-6(5), 6-1 victory over Daniil Medvedev on Sunday to win a second straight Indian Wells ATP title, both coming at the Russian's expense.

Alcaraz, 20, captured his first title since Wimbledon last July and became the first repeat winner at Indian Wells since Novak Djokovic won three straight titles from 2014-16.

In the women's section, World No. 1 Iga Swiatek powered past Greece's Maria Sakkari 6-4, 6-0 to claim her second title two years after she beat Sakkari for her first.

The rematch of the 2022 championship showdown produced an almost identical outcome, as the four-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek dominated the second set to seize her 19th career title and her second of 2024.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Royals FC posts win

Royals FC defeated Veterans FC 2-0 in the BDFA B-division league here on Monday.

The results: B-div.: Royals FC 2 (R. Saleem 5, Velu 33) bt Veterans FC 0; Postal Dept FC 1 (K. Rohan 35+2) drew with CIL FC 1 (John Joseph 10); C-div: City Club FC 1 (Seigoulan 59) bt Sporting Youths FC 0.

Veteran hockey player Karunakaran passes away

Former Karnataka State hockey player, P. Karunakaran, passed away in Wayanad, Kerala on Monday. He represented Karnataka in the National and zonal championships and also played for the junior team.

For BEML Bangalore, Karunakaran played for more than 20 years, winning the Super Division five times.

He was also attached to the Primrose HC and Royal HC. The Karnataka State Hockey Association condoled his death.

LIVE TELECAST

PVL: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6.30 p.m.